THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS
IN LIGHT OF THE QUR'AN

The Prophet MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA ﷺ the Elect

Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ

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Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ

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1. Cilt Mekke Devri
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Author: Osman Nûri Topbaş
Translators: Süleyman Derin
Erdinç Atasever
Redactor: Abdurrahman S. Candan
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Regarding the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Allah ﷻ, states in the Holy Quran:

وَاِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And you stand on an exalted standard of character." (al-Qalam, 68:4)

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِى رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللّٰهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيرًا

"Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the last day and remembers Allah much." (al-Ahzab, 33; 21)

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِىِّ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

"Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! Invoke (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a becoming salutation." (al-Ahzab, 33:56)

وَمَآ اٰتٰىكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهٰىكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

"So take what the Messenger enjoins on you, and desist from that which he forbids you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment." (al-Hashr, 59:7)

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُٓوا اَطِيعُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُٓوا اَعْمَالَكُمْ

"O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger, and render not your actions vain." (Muhammad, 47:33)

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ
وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ رَفِيقًا

"All who obey Allah and the messenger are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah; the Prophets, the most truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. What a beautiful fellowship!" (an-Nisa', 4:69)

اَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا اَنَّهُ مَنْ يُحَادِدِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَاَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذٰلِكَ الْخِزْىُ الْعَظِيمُ

"Do they not know that whoever acts in opposition to Allah and His Messenger, he shall surely have the fire of hell to abide in it? That is the grievous abasement." (at-Tawba, 9:63)

وَمَا اَرْسَلْنَاكَ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ

"And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds." (al-Anbiya, 107)

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُفٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate." (at-Tawbah, 128)

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your faults, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (Al-i Imran, 31)

قُلْ اَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger; but if they turn back, then surely Allah does not love the unbelievers." (Al-i Imran, 32)

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَا اَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ رَسُولَ اللهِ
وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيّٖنَ وَكَانَ اللهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Last of the prophets; and Allah is cognizant of all things." (al-Ahzab, 40)

وَالَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَاٰمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ
وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ وَاَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ

"And (as for) those who believe and do good, and believe in what has been revealed to Muhammad, and it is the very truth from their Lord, He will remove their evil from them and improve their condition." (Muhammed, 2)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says:

"I was sent to perfect morals." *(Muwatta', Husn'ul-Khuluq, 8)*

"Everything and everybody on earth and in the skies knows that I am the Messenger of Allah except the disobedient jinn and human beings." *(Ahmad ibn Hanbel, Musnad, III, 310)*

"I leave you two things if you hold fast to which you will never fall into misguidance. The Book of Allah (Holy Quran) and the Sunnah of His Prophet" *(Muwatta', Qadar, 3)*

"I will be the first of you to reach the Pool of Kawthar and I will meet you there! Our meeting place is the Pool. I see it at this very moment! I will testify on your behalf! I have been given, at this moment, the treasures of earth and their keys. By Allah, I fear not that you will return to idolatry after me! But I fear that you will get carried away in worldly greed and become jealous of each other, kill one another and perish just like those who have perished before you!" (Bukhari, Janaiz, 73; Muslim, Fadail, 31)

"Rest assured that I will go before you and wait for you! Be aware that our meeting spot in the Hereafter is the head of the Pool of Kawthar. Whosoever wishes to meet me tomorrow let him pull his hands and tongue away from sins." (Bukhari, Salat, 80; Ibn Saad, II, 227)

The following is from Mawlana Rumi:

"As long as I have life in this body, I am the slave of the Quran and the dust in the path of Muhammad the chosen...

My complaints shall abide against anyone who relates from me something contradicting this."

FOREWORD

The First and Last Link in the Chain of Prophets,
The Noblest in the Two Worlds,
The Prophet of Man and Jinn,
The Imam of the Holy Precinct,
The Light of all Being and Mercy for the Universe,

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA ﷺ

Considering it is the Light of Muhammad that provides the reason for existence in all creation, it is impossible to do justice, solely through these humble words, to the life, so unique and unblemished, of a man honored as the 'Beloved' by the Creator. Still, countless benefits await each and every person, depending on aptitude, in nonetheless attempting to narrate the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and convey his characteristics to new generations. Thus we will consider ourselves honored, if through this work, we are able to receive so little as a glimpse of the exceptional character of the Prophet ﷺ and emulate his great morals. Let it be known that we are far from making the claim of having understood and explained the Noble Prophet ﷺ as befits him. With respect to the magnificence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, our words should rather be taken as a thin ray of light that pierces through a felt covering a lamp. Allah ﷻ, declares:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ
لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

"Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much." (al-Ahzab, 21)

The Almighty also vows by the life of the Prophet, in order to show the greatness of his life in the Divine sight. لَعَمْرُكَ "By your life! ..." (al-Hijr, 72) It is therefore impossible to properly understand and encompass such an emphatically exalted life through mere words.

Sheikh Ghalib, one of the greatest figures of classical Ottoman poetry, gives expression to his love and respect for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the following:

Master… The Sultan of all Prophets, an illustrious king,
The eternal cure you are, Master, for the desperate and ailing,
Master, you are the most valued soul in the abode of the Lord,
Who vowed on your life, Master, by Divine words reinforced,
Ahmad, *Mahmud* and *Muhammad*, you are, praised out of all kinds,
A mercy for us from the Lord, strengthened through the Divine…

So high is the value of the Prophet ﷺ in the Divine sight that the Almighty considers obedience to the Prophet to be obedience to Himself. Even a little disobedience of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is enough to annul religious deeds and make them meaningless. Respect for him is taken as a test of piety; even addressing the Prophet ﷺ improperly was considered as a residue of ignorance. Allah the Glorious has thus declared the necessity of observing the remembrance of the Prophet ﷺ in our hearts and tongues, even commanding us to recite during each in daily salat:

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

"Peace be upon you O Prophet, as well as the mercy and blessings of Allah!"

Although greeting someone during the prescribed prayer normally annuls it, Allah ﷻ, has not only exempted the salutation of His Prophet from this legal ruling, He has made it obligatory. Concerning this, Imam al-Ghazali says:

"As you send your greetings to the Prophet ﷺ during salat, consider him present in person, in your heart. Rest assured that your greetings will reach him and he will respond to you in an even better way." (*İhyâu Ulûmi'd-Dîn*, I, 224)

Khalid al-Baghdadi, the famous Naqshbandi Sheikh, in the fourth letter of his *Maktûbât* quotes the erudite scholar Shihâb ibn-i Hajar al-Makkî as saying:

"When we recite «as-salâmu alayka» in the sitting position of the salat, this greeting is addressed to the Prophet, as if for the Almighty to inform the Messenger of the prayer of his followers. Having witnessed thereby the prayer of his followers in this world, the Prophet will give evidence in their favor in the Hereafter. Also, remembering his spiritual presence with us while we pray will increase the heart's awareness and concentration." [1]

It is difficult to truly understand and explain the immensely precious life of the Prophet, a man with whom the universe boasts. By mentioning his blessed name, we only have the intention of honoring our words, and perhaps partake in that

1. *Maktûbât-ı Mawlânâ Khâlid*, p. 118; *Risâlatu'r-Râbıta,* (Mawlânâ Safiyyuddîn, in the *Rashahat* gloss) p. 225-226.

honor ourselves. So we implore our readers to excuse the weakness of our words in conveying the great value of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Doubtless, tongues also suffer the same incapacity the understanding does, caused by the inability to behold and ponder the Gracious Messenger ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ is an eternal realm of mystery, access to which is determined according to the force and sincerity of love for him. We ask the help of Allah ﷻ, that He grant us access to the blessed life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the ability to draw from his exemplary conduct; and that He forgive us for the errors we may make in the process of putting his illustrious life into words.

In the spirit of our righteous predecessors, we hereby repeat:

O Allah! Where shall the sinners take refuge if you only forgive the pious and obedient servants? Who shall they beg if you only show mercy to the pious and the god-fearing?[2]

And we too take refuge in the vast ocean of Divine mercy and ask His forgiveness for the unintentional slips of our tongue, wrought by our flaws and the audacity with which we have set out to elaborate the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, to the limited extent of opportunity words provide.

O Allah! For the sake of the Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, please forgive us.

Amin!

Dear Readers!

The work which we present here is the expanded edition of the fourth volume of *Nebiler Silsilesi*, first published in Turkish. The first three volumes covered the lives of previous Prophets. The fourth volume, an outline of the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, has been, in this new edition, expanded into a larger two-volume account, the first on the Meccan period, and the second on the Madinan period of the Prophet's life ﷺ.

I sincerely thank Murat Kaya for his help in finding the sources of hadith and the life of the Prophet ﷺ. My thanks also go to the translators who have done a great job in rendering this work into English. The names of the previous authors of the life and times of the Blessed Messenger ﷺ, I also mention with respect. I ask for the forgiveness and mercy of Allah on their behalf. Success comes from Allah ﷻ, alone.

Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ
January 2005 / Uskudar

2. Bayhaqi, *Shuabu'l-Îman,* II, 26; Ghazzalî, *Ihyâ*, I, 338.

INTRODUCTION

The Significance of Knowing the Life of the Prophet for Understanding and Practicing Islam

There are many different elements in forming one's education and character. Since human beings form their personalities as well as language, religion and moral qualities in accordance with the living examples they see around themselves, who they deem as the most important living example around them is adopted as a guide or an exemplary personality. Bar a few exceptions, this is how human nature generally is. For example, every child learns how to speak first from the parents, and then goes on to learn even more languages; and if he does, it is only through imitating other examples.

The inclination to imitate is an important character-forming trait in every human being. Education mostly consists in setting examples for imitation, good or bad. One forms his personality in line with the influences impressed by the given environment, to the degree of the intensity of his imitation. Although language is acquired naturally, religious and spiritual characteristics cannot be acquired as easily.

The reason behind this difficulty is that along with the will power, man has also been given an ego (*nafs*) and Satan, as part of the great test. These two great obstacles prevent the practice of virtues, and urge man on the contrary to head in the opposite direction. There is therefore a vital need for Prophets and saints, people of delicate hearts who have perfected their spiritual lives, around which they have formed their personalities, having shackled their egos and repelled Satan. Man is otherwise unable to escape from heedlessness, misguidance and disobedience, which might cost him eternal salvation. It is also for this reason that human beings follow the footsteps of those who captivate them, good or bad, on whom they model themselves. It is tragic to see today the sinners and the morally ill, who defeated by their egos, let their evil guides lay waste to their lives. It is simply a case of having placed wrong people on the thrones of their hearts, whereby they have ended up deceiving only themselves.

Rumi explains the paradox of man's condition in the following lines:

It is not amazing to see a lamb flee from a wolf, since the wolf is its enemy. But seeing a lamb fall in love with a wolf…that is cause for wonder!

Instead of leaving our hearts to the wolves during our fleeting stay on earth and thereby losing eternal bliss, we must submit it to the best of examples, the leader of the universe, the master of the Prophets, Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, lovingly obey him and make him the only king of our hearts. Loving him was made an obligation by Allah the Almighty,[3] as expressed in following *ayah*, and many others in the Holy Quran alike:

اَلنَّبِیُّ اَوْلٰی بِالْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ

"The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves,**…"** (al-Ahzâb, 6)

In the words of the Prophet ﷺ narrated by Abu Hurayrah, loving him is a condition of *iman*.

"By Him in Whose Hands my life resides, none of you will have faith until he loves me more than his father and his children." (*Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 13)

According to another hadith narrated by Anas ﷺ, the sweetness of faith is tasted only if Allah and His Prophet become dearer to the believer than anything else. (*Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 15[4])

The following, narrated by Abdullah ibn Hisham ﷺ, highlights the level of love between us and the Prophet ﷺ.

"One day Omar ﷺ went for a walk with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. At one point the Prophet ﷺ took Omar's hand, prompting Omar to exclaim:

"By Allah, I love you very much".

"Even more than your children, Omar?" the Prophet ﷺ then asked.

"Yes!"

"More than your family, too?"

"Yes, Prophet of Allah."

"More than your wealth?"

"Yes, Prophet of Allah, more than my wealth!"

"And even more than yourself?" then asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

"No, Messenger of Allah", Omar ﷺ replied hesitantly.

"Your faith will never be complete, Omar, until you love me more than yourself."

3. See at-Tawba, 24.
4. See Bukhari, Iman, 9, 14; Muslim, Iman, 67.

So Omar ؓ went away and stayed alone and returned after a while. Standing in the middle of the mosque, he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Messenger of Allah, now I love you more than myself!"

"That is it, Omar; that is it!" the Noble Messenger ﷺ replied, meaning that only now was Omar's faith complete. (*Bukhari*, *Ayman*, *3*)

The prerequisites of love are persistent remembrance of the beloved and conforming with the beloved in all actions and thoughts. In order to obtain a heart filled with the love for the Prophet ﷺ, one needs to learn his Sunnah and imitate it with great care and respect. Without knowing his life and embellishing the heart with his love, Islam cannot be practiced in the ideal way. The road to gaining the love of Allah ﷻ, runs through the love of the Prophet ﷺ. But loving him requires knowing him; and without loving the Prophet ﷺ in the extreme, one cannot perfect his faith. It is owing to such reasons that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took delicate care in establishing such love, explaining to his followers the refined aspects of how to duly develop this necessary affection.

Being the peak of all Prophets, the life of the Noble Messenger ﷺ embodies and surpasses all the virtues of the past 124 thousand or so Prophets said to have come. Not only did he have the gift of guiding the people of his own time, he has also been blessed with guiding the following generations until the Final Hour, as the *Khatamun Nabiyyîn*, the Seal of All Prophets.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the only Prophet, indeed the only man in history, every minute detail of whose life has been recorded. Only a portion of the exemplary conduct of other previous Prophets has reached us. The Noble Prophet ﷺ remains the only one of that blessed chain whose life is thoroughly known, from the simplest daily actions to the most delicate social dealings. This knowledge, as a grace of Allah ﷻ, will be transmitted from one generation to another until the end of time.

Thus what grants superiority to Islamic morality and elevates it from pure theory to practice is the very fortunate fact that the exemplary actions of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ were recorded in their full details and preserved until today without any change.

As human beings we ought to adopt many good moral characteristics, including trust in the Almighty, gratitude, contentedness with the Divine verdict, patience against afflictions, bravery, sacrifice for others, generosity, modesty, just to name a few. In addition, we have to maintain our balance against the ups and downs of life. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the gift of the Almighty to all humanity in setting the best standard in the adoption of these virtues for others.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ virtually began his life as an orphan, the most feeble position in society, going through all kinds of difficult phases until ultimately reaching the peak of his mission as a Prophet, as well as a head of state. In all walks of life, these different stages set others the best of example to follow. Owing to his balanced stance in the face of strong tides in various situations, persons from different backgrounds can draw good lessons from his blessed life, not only in theory but also in practice.

Therefore the fitting return for the boundless grace of Allah ﷻ, would be none other than learning the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ with a spiritually vibrant heart. Such learning must inevitably lead to practice and its teaching to others. But just as importantly, in doing so, we must also take good care in applying the correct method of approaching his life, as the actions of the Noble Messenger ﷺ reflect two different kinds of acts.

1- Acts applicable only to the Prophet ﷺ himself; as when he would perform salat at night until his feet would swell, when he would fast continuously for days on end; when he would hand out all he had – even if it were as great as Mount Uhud, he would say- for charity without reserving anything for himself except for what he held back to pay off a debt, and the fact he did not leave any inheritance and forbade receiving charity not only for himself but also for his offsprings until the end of time.

Although the Prophet ﷺ had stated he was a human being like any other (Bukhari, Salât 31, Ahkâm 20), he is also known to have dissuaded some Companions from following him in fasts without break, saying, "I am not like you, for I am provided with food and drink by Allah." (Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 145)

The Believers simply do not have the power to imitate the Prophet ﷺ in such difficult matters. Such acts are therefore applicable only to him, with the followers not allowed to follow the Prophet ﷺ in like manner.

2- Acts that are to be emulated universally. The Prophet's ﷺ Sunnah is for all human beings of all different social statuses and backgrounds to follow according to their capacities.

We are not obliged to emulate the virtues displayed by the Prophet ﷺ in the first section described above; virtues as high as the skies which we are incapable of following. But as for the second virtues, we are obliged to imitate them throughout our lives until we breathe our last, to the best of our capabilities. In full appreciation of the great importance of the Prophet ﷺ in one's life, it has been common for Turks to dub each and every one of their children *Mehmetcik*, that is 'little Muhammad', wishing thereby to encourage them to become role models, to the best of their potentials, in putting to practice the great ways of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Understanding the life of the Prophet ﷺ is also very important in understanding the wisdom and ethos of the Holy Quran.

As stated there:

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْاَمِينُ. عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِينَ. بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ.

"Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the Trustworthy Spirit upon your heart, that you may admonish in a clear Arabic tongue." (al-Shuara, 193-195)

Effectively, his twenty-three year period of prophethood is an explanation of the Holy Quran, which makes it impossible to take even a step in comprehending the Sacred Book without any knowledge of his life.[5]

To correctly understand Islamic culture and achieve spiritual completion, thus unavoidably requires one to receive inspiration from his splendid twenty-three year life. Spiritual life is perfected only through the positive energy that comes from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His chaste life is like a painting, in which all the beauties of Islam are fully exhibited.

Neither can those who call people to Islam nor can teachers do their work without knowing the blessed life of their Prophet ﷺ, since he gives the most concrete examples in teaching as well as inviting people to Islam. Such knowledge will unite knowledge with the heart, establishing a balance between the two.

A young man wanting to be trustworthy person in his society, a head of state wishing to be just ruler among his people, a man seeking to be a compassionate father towards his wife and children, an army commander striving for success, and in short, all Muslims from all walks of life are bound to find their best example in the life of the Prophet (*Siyar'un-Nabî*).[6]

5. Unless verbal truths are illustrated by physical examples, one will inevitably fall into error in practice, for people always tend to comprehend abstract things in line with their own experiences and according to the level of their own understanding. Concrete examples bear out the shape in which a given abstract truth is supposed to be embodied, leaving no room for further argument. All opinions, therefore, propounded for the good of humanity have lead to various differences in practice, owing simply to their lack of physical and concrete criteria. Islamic thought, in this sense, contains a wealth and perfection incomparable to any other; and making this possible has solely been the fact of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ rendering concrete the entire body of abstract truths through the behavior he exemplified throughout his life and their immediate recording, in their totality, by the Companions, which providentially have been passed onto us.

6. "No single person can take a step beyond the principles of Muhammad. Despite all the success that has come the way of Europe, all the laws and principles decreed by Europe are insufficient in relation to Islamic culture. We, the nations of Europe, in spite of all the opportunities our civilization is impregnated with, are still only on the first step of the ladder on whose final step Muhammad

The Wisdom behind the Choice of the Arabian Peninsula as the Cradle of Islam

In order to better appreciate the choice of Arabia as the birthplace of Islam we need to know the nature, traditions and characteristics of Arabs as well as the geographical and social conditions of their homeland.

The two superpowers of the time, the Byzantines and the Persians, were both neighbors to Arab lands. The Byzantines had many vassals and had problems with their subjects in religious issues. Their rulers corrupted Christianity by changing it according to their whims. In their Church councils, they proclaimed some scriptures as holy and others as heretical, manipulating the rules of Christian faith as they wished. They used excommunication for political reasons, and it was not uncommon for the new ruler to excommunicate the previous one. The heavy taxes enforced upon people and the bribery rampant among administration corrupted the base of society.

Persia was also in the grip of moral and political chaos. Allowing one to marry with one's mother and daughter, the Zoroastrian religion was effectively wreaking havoc on human dignity. The Mazdean claim was that just as air, water and fire belonged to all, human beings exercised a similar right over women whom they could commonly use without any discrimination, just like the rest of their properties.

Greek civilization was in the vicious circle of endless philosophical disputes and superstitions, whereas Indian civilization remained in a primitive phase, both morally and socially.

Arabs, on the other hand, were living in close-knit societies, and surrounded by vast deserts, were remote from the threat of military and cultural invasions. They had never been colonized; hence they were like raw material uncorrupted by any foreign culture. Their natures were not polluted. Virtues like honor, keeping one's word, generosity, locality, bravery and patience, among others, were still very much alive, except that they would either be shown in excess or in the bare minimum, and not in the perfected balance that befits human nature. Without a guide to show them the true way, they were living in the darkness of ignorance.

Their ignorance and slavery to their egos had veiled their good characteristics hidden underneath their human nature. Fearing they might be forced to prostitution by the enemy if captured as slaves in battles, the pagan Arabs would kill their daughters by burying them alive, much to the heartfelt dismay of their mothers; or they would squander their most basic needs just to protect their reputations of

stands. Doubtless, nobody shall beat him in this race. And this Book (the Quran), being exceptionally practical, shall never cease to wield influence for eternity and will gather other nations around itself." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

generosity. Their bravery and fearlessness would incite them to engage in ceaseless battles. The aftermath was always great bloodshed. The advent of Islam and the emergence of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, turned this tide upon its heels, steering all the wrong manifestations of their moral values to a positive direction, eliminating the negative outcomes of the good qualities they had deep inside.

Another reason as to why Arabia was chosen as the cradle of the last Prophet was to dispel any doubt that would have arisen regarding the authenticity of the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Since the Arabs were an illiterate people, they were left unaffected from the cultures and philosophies of surrounding nations. Had the Prophet ﷺ been a literate man conversant with the culture and knowledge of neighboring civilizations, as well as the content of their sacred scriptures, doubt would have arisen that the Prophet had conjured up his prophecy through learning from others. Similarly, with an ingrained resistance based on the long histories of their civilizations, the Persians or Byzantines would have perhaps found it difficult to accept Islam had the religion appeared in either of these environments. In addition, it could have led other people to think that Islam was the product of these environments and not a Revelation of the Almighty. To prevent such doubts Islam was therefore sent to an illiterate society through an unlettered Prophet ﷺ, leaving no room to validate the claim that Islam was a product of a literate Prophet and his cultured people.

Arabia also had the advantage of occupying a central place in the world map between Europe, Asia and Africa, facilitating the spread and accessibility of Islam.[7] The Holy Quran describes Mecca as a place unfit for agriculture,[8] necessitating the locals to travel in order to get by. Agricultural societies are normally very much attached to their soil and not fond of travelling long journeys. Similarly, craftsmen are attached to their workshops and therefore are not fond of traveling either. As tradesmen, the Meccans were accustomed to travel long distances which proved to be a blessing for the spread of Islam in the long run. The advantage they had in being able to go to distant countries and their experience in interacting with many different people could count as another reason as to why Islam was sent to the people of Mecca.

The Divine Will graced the Arabic language as the vehicle of transmission due to the excellent qualities inherent within that language itself. Compared to other languages, the Arabic language enjoys superior qualities in terms of its harmony and syntax, in producing derivations, conjugations and so on. Arabic has the power of transmitting the most difficult meanings in the curtest words, without losing any nuance. Its richness allows the language to transmit the most abstract ideas in the

7. See Muhammad Ilyas Abdulghanî, *Târihu Makka,* p. 12-13.
8. See Ibrahim, 37.

most admirably eloquent way. The Arabic language had completed its development early, making it the only language at the time capable of transmitting the Divine Will in the most perfect way.

The Arabian peninsula is also a blessed environment. The great-grandfather of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ lived in this area and built the Kaabah, the foundations of which had been there as old as the history of mankind. With an awareness of this historical fact, Meccans considered themselves as heirs of the spiritual inheritance of Ibrahim and Ismail عليهما السلام. This is another factor that helped the acceptance and understanding of Islam.

Though one can certainly enumerate many more causes for the choice of this land for the revelation of Islam, there ultimately lies a wisdom behind it which we cannot know, and which is known only to Allah ﷻ. We therefore feel compelled to conclude this discussion with the words "اَللهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمُرَادِهِ : Allah knows best what He wills.

Mecca: The Mother of Towns

Known as the mother of towns, Mecca is also called "Becca" and "the safe town". In Babylonian, both Mecca and Becca mean a "house". The greater area of Mecca is surrounded by Yemen in the south, the Mediterranean Sea in the north, the Persian Gulf in the east and the Read Sea in the west. It is at the crossroads of intercontinental routes, in particular Africa, where Jeddah, in particular, as a harbor by the Red Sea, played an important role in connecting Mecca to the sea routes. In Mecca, the area where the Kaabah was situated was called *al-Batha*, and the town center was called *Batn'u Mecca*.

Mecca was established by a great Prophet of Allah ﷻ. Ibrahim عليه السلام, the father of Prophets, had a wife called Sarah who had not borne him any child. Sarah gave her slave girl Hagar to Ibrahim عليه السلام and they married after her emancipation. From this marriage Ismail عليه السلام was born, to whom the Muhammedan Light was transmitted, much to the disappointment of Sarah who had expected the light to be passed on through her. Seeing the light passed onto Ismail instead from her former slave girl Hagar, she became very sad. She asked Ibrahim عليه السلام to take Hagar and Ismail عليه السلام to a remote place. This was, of course, only the visible reason behind the greater, underlying Divine Will. So with the command of Allah ﷻ, Ibrahim عليه السلام took them to Mecca, guided on the way through by the Archangel Jibrîl. Upon reaching Mecca the Angel told Ibrahim عليه السلام to house his family over there.

But Ibrahim عليه السلام protested, saying:

"This place is neither fit for agriculture nor for animal husbandry."

Jibril however calmed him:

"Indeed…But from the offspring of your sons the unlettered Prophet will emerge. And with him will be completed the Divine Word, the words of unity (*tawhid*)." (Ibn-i Sa'd, I, 164)

Abdullah b. Abbâs[9] (may Allah be happy with him) narrates:

"Prophet Ibrahim took our mother Hagar and his son, still an infant, to Mecca. He left them behind a tree which near the fount of Zamzam awaiting to be dug. He also gave them a basket of dates and a jug of water. When he was about to go back, Hagar asked:

"Did Allah command you to leave us here in this barren land?"

"Yes", Ibrahim answered.

Hagar then said in great submission and trust to Allah:

"In that case our Lord will protect us. We will not be forsaken."

She then returned to her son Ismail. Ibrahim, on the other hand, began walking away. As soon as Ibrahim got out of sight of both Ismail and Hagar, he opened his hands towards the skies and supplicated:

رَبَّنَآ اِنِّی اَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِی بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِی زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ
بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ فَاجْعَلْ اَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ
تَهْوِی اِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

"'O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit, near Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may keep up prayer. Therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits, haply they may be grateful' (Ibrâhîm, 37)" (*Bukhari, Anbiya, 9*)

9. Abdulllah ibn Abbas ﷺ is the son of Abbas ﷺ and thus the cousin of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. His mother is Umm'ul-Fadl Lubaba, the woman who accepted Islam immediately after Khadijah ﷺ. Moments after his birth, three years prior to the Hegira, he was taken to the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who took the toddler in his arms, rubbing in the child's palate a date he had chewed in his mouth. Due to this incident, known as *tahnik*, Ibn Abbas was to later stand out among the Companions. Afterward, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ personally prayed for him on two occasions, in one of these with the words, "Allah, grant him a depth of knowledge in religion and teach him the Quran!" He thus became the Companion with the greatest insight into the Quran, earning him the appellation *at-Tarjuman*, the Interpreter. He was also known as *Hibr'ul-Ummah*, meaning the most knowledgeable of the Believers. Including repetitions, he narrated a total of 1660 hadiths. Spending the last few years of his life as a blind man, he passed away in Ta'if, in 687 (H. 68), at the age of 71.

Leaving his only son and wife back in this barren land, Ibrahim ﷺ prayed to Allah ﷻ, in the following way:

رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا بَلَدًا اٰمِنًا وَارْزُقْ اَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
مَنْ اٰمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ

"My Lord, make this a Land of Safety, and feed its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." (al-Baqara, 126)

The Almighty accepted his prayers, exempting the unbelievers from His mercy and threatening them in the following words:

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَاُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ اَضْطَرُّهٗٓ اِلٰى ع
َذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

"…He said: (Yea), and such as reject Faith,-for a while will I grant them their pleasure, but will soon drive them to the torment of Fire,- an evil destination (indeed)!" (al-Baqara, 126)

Even today, due to the prayers of Ibrahim ﷺ, the Almighty fills the hearts of pilgrims with love and respect towards the Holy Kaabah. Souls find unparalleled peace and tranquility in those holy lands.

The little water left by Ibrahim for Hagar was consumed in no time. Hoping to find some water Hagar, ran between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times. The distance between these two hills is about four hundred meters. When she was running between the hills, she was also watching her baby with the corner of her eyes. But there was no trace of life around; no human beings, not even birds. When she yet again reached the Hill of Marwa she heard a voice command:

"Keep silent and listen!"

"Yes, I can hear you… Please help us if you can!" she answered.

She then saw an angel digging with either its wings or heels the fount of Zamzam. Water gushed forth. Jubilant, Hagar first filled her water-skin. Yet, the more she took with her hands from the water, the more it sprang. She immediately started making a little well around the spring to collect the gushing water, repeating the words '*zam zam'* at the same time for the water to stop. ('*zam zam'* means 'stop, stop').

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "May Allah bestow His Mercy upon the mother of Ismail! Had she not hastened to fill her water-skin with water from the Zamzam well, Zamzam would have been a stream flowing on the surface of the earth." Ibn Abbas further added, "The Prophet Ibrahim brought Ismail and his mother to Mecca and she was suckling Ismail and she had a water-skin with her." (Bukhârî, Enbiyâ, 9)

The mother and her son were continuing to live by only on the water from Zamzam. After a while, passing by the spring of Zamzam, the tribe of Jurhum saw a bird fly up and down from a certain place. Guessing there to be a trace of life, they sent two people to check it out. Once they found out about the spring, they asked permission to settle near it. Hagar allowed them on the condition they do not claim ownership of the spring. The Jurhumites agreed, making them the first tribe to settle in Mecca.

In time, Mecca developed into a city-state. The tribe of Huza'a took Mecca by force in 207 when they were not allowed to settle by the Jurhumites. The sons of Ismail remained neutral in this battle and hence they were left unharmed by the new occupying force. They ruled the city for long years, during which they deviated from the right path of Ibrahim. They supported the worship of idols, promoting the deviant faith. They set up an idol named Hubal. When the offspring of Ismail became more powerful under the leadership of Qusayy, they expelled Huza'a out of Mecca in 440.

Qusayy established the Dar'un-Nadwa which functioned like the parliament of the city-state of Mecca along with the other institutions he founded to organize the social and religious life. Duties like the commandership of the battles and the protection of the flag (*qiyâdah*), the service of the Kaabah (*sidânah*, *hijâbah*), watering of the pilgrims (*sikâyah*) and feeding of the pilgrims out of the taxes collected (*ridânah*) were under the responsibility of Qusayy. Before his death, he requested in his will that these duties be passed onto his sons Abd'ud-Dâr and Abd Menaf, initiating the beginning of the passage of these duties from father to the son thereafter.[10]

All the inhabitants of Mecca could join in the sessions of parliament once they reached they turned forty. However, the rule was that only the family or clan chiefs could participate in these meetings. Interestingly, it was also this assembly that was used to oppose the mission of the Prophet ﷺ.

Other local assemblies, or *nadi*, like these were also used for social gatherings and other activities in addition to their main purpose as places to make military and political decisions.

10. See Ibn Hisham, I, 135-142.

As the soil of Mecca was unfit for agriculture, the locals earned their living primarily through trade. Mecca thus occupied a pivotal place in the commercial life of the Arabian Peninsula. Commerce in the town was continuously lively through summer and winter. The destination of trade was Syria in winter and Yemen in summer. Chiefly used to carry commercial goods were camels and at times the number of camels in a single caravan would reach to two-thousand-five-hundred. The prosperity Meccan lives received through trade was of such immensity that the Almighty reminded them of this exclusive favor when inviting them to Islam:

لِاِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ. اِيلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَآءِ وَالصَّيْفِ. فَلْيَعْبُدُوا
رَبَّ هٰذَا الْبَيْتِ. اَلَّذِى اَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَاٰمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ.

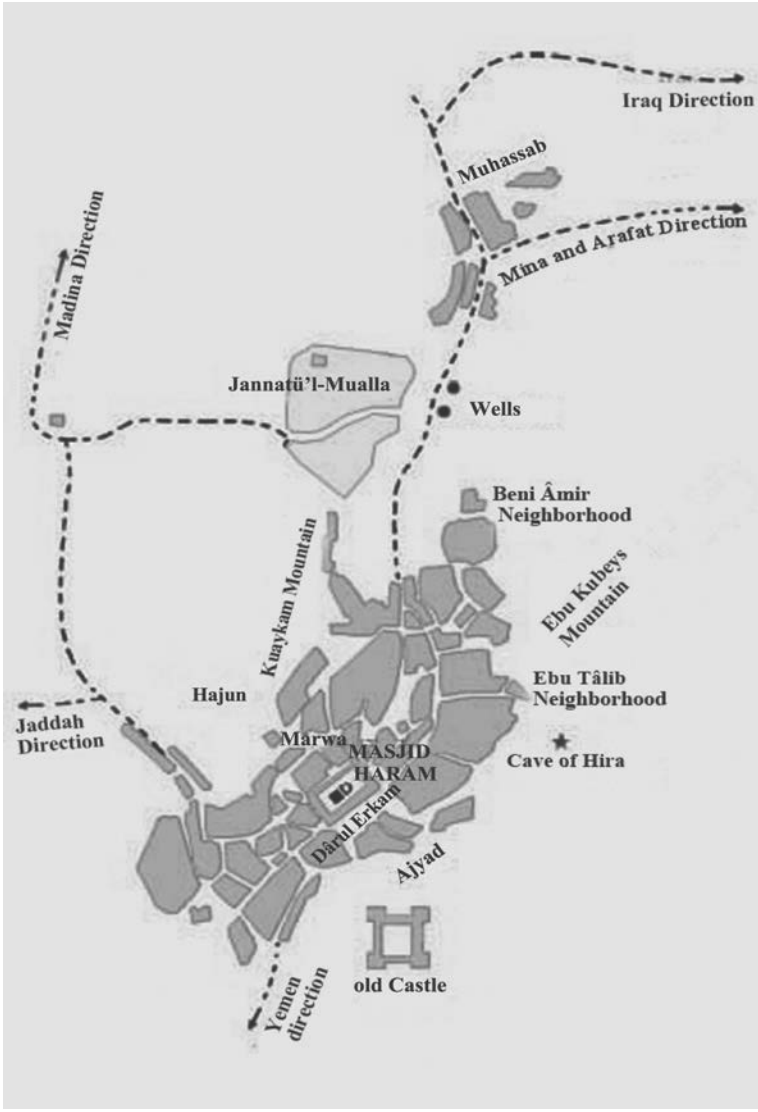
"For the protection of the Quraysh; their protection during their trading caravans in the winter and the summer. So let them serve the Lord of this House, Who feeds them against hunger and gives them security against fear." (Quraysh, 1-4)

Caravan trade was not easy in the Arabian Peninsula due to tribal turmoil and lack of a central political power. Only during the forbidden months, which prohibited engagement in any kind of conflict and highway robbery, could a trader feel safe and secure. Even in this respect Mecca had superiority over other places. While the general ban for violence and transgression covered only the month of Rajab, Mecca enjoyed an extended period of non-violence that extended over four months called *al-Ashuru'l-Hurum*. As for the remaining eight months, the *Basl* institution protected the wealth of many families from falling prey to potential plunder.[11]

Mecca held three trade fairs in its vicinity called *Ukâz*, *Majannah* and *Dhu'l-Majâz*. Held in times of pilgrimage according to the *Jahiliyya* schedule, the fairs would attract a significant crowd, endowing Meccan traders with handsome revenue.

Being the all important precinct for the House of God, Mecca always attracted the attention of neighboring powers. In spite of numerous attempts of invasion throughout history, Mecca was somehow able to retain its independence. Even the Byzantines, keen to extend their influence over the peninsula, were ultimately unsuccessful.

11. See Hamidullâh, I, 24-25.



The History of the Kaabah and Its Sacredness

The Kaabah, mentioned twice in the Quran, literally means a cubic object. Notwithstanding its other famous synonyms referred to in the Quran like *al-Bayt*, *Baytullâh*, *al-Baytu'l-Atîq*, *al-Baytu'l-Harâm*, *al-Baytu'l-Muharram*, *al-Masjidu'l-Harâm*, it is often called the *Kaabah-i Muazzama*, the highly respected Kaabah.[12]

12. The Kaabah was erected upon approximately 1.5 meter-wide columns. Its walls contain a total of 1614 basalt stones of various dimensions brought from around Mecca. On the east corner is the *Hajar'ul-Aswad*, the Black Stone. It is kept in a silver casing and marks the beginning and ending point of

The story of the Kaabah begins with Prophet Adam ﷺ, the first human being. Upon descending to the world, he was given the duty of building a place of worship on the grounds where the Kaabah stands today.[13] This is mentioned in the Quran in the following verse:

اِنَّ اَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِى بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ

"Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bekka, blessed and a guidance for the nations**."** (Âl-i İmrân, 96)

In response to a question posed by Abu Dharr ﷺ[14], the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reveals the first building constructed on the face of Earth as the Kaabah, and the second as Masjid'ul-Aqsâ, the holy mosque of Jerusalem.[15] The valley of Mecca was hence chosen as a holy place since the very beginning of human history.

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circumambulation. The Kaabah's east corner is called *Rukn'ul-Hajar'ul-Aswad* or *Rukn'us-Sharqi*, its north corner *Rukn'ul-Iraqi*, its west corner *Rukn'us-Shami*, while its south corner *Rukn'ul-Yamani*. The drain channeling the rainwater from the roof of the Kaabah (*Mizab'ul-The Kaabah*) is known as the Golden Drain. Starting from the Kaabah, the first three meters of the area enclosed by a semicircular wall, standing at a height of 1.32 meters and width of 1.55 meters, that rises opposite the northwest corner of the Sacred House between *Rukn'ul-Iraqi* and *Rukn'us-Shami*, is known as *Hatim*. This section was included in the main building of the Kaabah put up by Ibrahim ﷺ. Restricted by a lack of material, however, Quraysh, during their restoration, had no other choice but to leave it outside. The remaining 5.56 meter area known either as *Hijrul-the Kaabah*, *Hijru Ismail* or *Hatira*, is the exact spot where Ibrahim ﷺ had made a shade for Hajar and his son Ismail from an *arak* tree. According to tradition, both Hajar and Ismail –upon whom be peace- are buried in the area of *Hijr*. It has thus been decreed obligatory to perform circumambulation from the outside of the *Hijr*. The door of the Kaabah, on the northeast of the House, stands at height of 2,25 meters from the ground. The section of the wall located between the door and the *Hajar'ul-Aswad* is known as *Multazam*. The exact height of the Kaabah is 14 meters. The length of *Multazam* is 12.84 meters, while that of *Hatim* 11.28 meters. *Hatim* and *Rukn'ul-Yamani* is separated by a distance of 11.52 meters. Holding the roof inside the Sacred House are three pillars, lined in the middle, from the south wall to *Hatim*. A ladder to the roof is found on the right hand side of the entrance, which also has a door of its own, called *Bab'ut-Tawbah*, the Door of Repentance. The inner walls of the Kaabah and its roof are covered with a green fabric made of silk. (Muhammad Ilyâs Abdulghanî, p. 33-66; Kâmil Mîrâs, *Tecrid Tercemesi,* VI, 17-20)

13. See Tabarî, *Târih*, I, 124
14. Abu Dharr's ﷺ real name is Jundab ibn Junada. He was known as Ghifari in reference to the tribe of Ghifar from where he originally sprung. As the fifth Muslim, he was a man of piety, contentedness and abstinence, which lead the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to call him the *Masih'ul-Islam*, i.e. the Isa ﷺ of Islam. Constantly by the side of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, he would look to reap the greatest benefit from his presence, asking what he knew not to the Prophet ﷺ for clarification; accumulating so deep a knowledge in the end that Ali ﷺ is known to have called him 'the repertoire of knowledge'. The total amount of his hadith narrations is 281. Breathing his last in Rabaza near Mecca in the 31st year of Hegira, his funeral last was conducted by a small group who laid him to rest.
15. See Bukhari, Anbiyâ, 10.

After the Deluge of Nuh ﷺ, the Kaabah remained for a long time under sand. It was rebuilt by Ibrahim many years after he left his son and wife in the land. Revisiting his family in Mecca years after, and seeing that his son was now a young man, Ibrahim ﷺ told him:

"Our Lord commands us to build a house for him…and you will help me!"

The young Ismail ﷺ carried stones while Ibrahim ﷺ erected the walls of the Kaabah. The piece of marble carrying the footprints of Ibrahim ﷺ was used as a stepping stone to help him reach the higher places of the wall.[16] The Holy Quran narrates the event in the following words:

وَاِذْ يَرْفَعُ اِبْرٰهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَاِسْمٰعِيلُ

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"And when Ibrahim and Ismail raised the foundations of the House: Our Lord! accept from us; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing" (al-Baqara, 127)[17]

The Kaabah is the House of the Almighty only symbolically; that is to say, God does not live in it. Muslims pray to Allah ﷻ, by circumambulating it seven times, starting from the Black Stone placed by Ibrahim ﷺ near one of the corners of the Kaabah. The Black Stone descended from Paradise, and as reported by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, it was whiter than milk and snow at the time of its descent, darkened in time by the sins of human beings. (Tirmidhî, Hajj, 49/877; Ahmad, I, 307)[18]

It has also been reported that fires before and after Islam had a part to do with the darkening of the Stone. But there are accounts that the side of the Stone facing the wall of the Kaabah still remained very white.

Mujahid narrates that when Abdullah ibn Zubayr ﷺ demolished the walls of the Kaabah in order to renovate it, he saw that the inner side of the Black Stone was white.

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16. Said Bektash, *Fadlu'l-Hajari'l-Aswad wa Maqâmi Ibrâhîm ((upon him peace))*, p. 108; Muhammad Ilyâs Abdulghanî, p. 71-73.
According to one source, Ibrâhîm ﷺ later stood up on the marble, the *Maqamu Ibrahim* and invited people to *hajj*. (Said Bektash, p. 111) In reference to the *Maqamu Ibrahim*, Allah ﷻ, says:

وَاِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَاَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَقَامِ اِبْرٰهِيمَ مُصَلًّى

"And when We made the House a resort for mankind and sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Ibrahim stood (to pray)." (al-Baqara, 125)

17. For the details of the incident, see Bukhari, Anbiya, 9.

18. Scholars have commented that if sins can have so great an effect on even a stone so as to leave it black, who knows the intensity of the tarnish they can leave on the heart. Abstaining from sins with utmost effort is therefore a must.

Present during the reinstatement of the Stone in the 339th year of Hegira after having been taken away by the heretic Qarmatîs was Muhammad ibn Nâfî el-Huzâî, who later gave the following testimony:

"I was there to inspect the Black Stone when it was removed from its case and I saw that only one side, the visible side of the Stone was black, while the other three sides were white."

In the 1039th year of Hegira, the Kaabah was ruined by a strong flood that swept across Mecca. During the rebuilding, Imâm Ibn Allân al-Makkî inspected the Black Stone, commenting that "the parts of the Black Stone installed facing the walls of the Kaabah are as white as the marble where Ibrahim ﷺ prayed (*Maqâmu Ibrâhim*)"[19]

The Quran narrates that once the building of the Kaabah was completed, Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail ﷺ prayed to Allah ﷻ, in the following manner:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَآ اُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَاَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ. رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.

"Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to Your (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Your (will); and show us our place for the celebration of rites; and turn unto us in Mercy; for You art the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

Our Lord! Send among them a Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Your Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: For You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.»" (al-Baqara, 128-129)

Upon the completion of the Kaabah, the Almighty commanded Ibrahim to invite people for pilgrimage:

وَاَذِّنْ فِى النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَاْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلٰى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَاْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

"And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage: they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, from every remote path.**"** (al-Hajj, 27)

Heeding to this Divine commandment, Ibrahim ﷺ climbed the nearby Abu Qubays Mountain, and called out to all four directions with an audible voice, informing people of their obligation to visit the Kaabah.[20]

19. See Said Bektash, p. 36-38; Dr. Muhammad Ilyâs Abdulghanî, p. 43.
20. See Kâmil Mîrâs, *Tecrid Tercemesi,* VI, 20-21; Said Bektash, p. 111.

After this declaration the Archangel Jibril came and showed Ibrahim the borders of the Holy Mosque and the distances of Safâ and Marwâ, telling him to erect stones to mark these borders. The Archangel afterward taught him all the rituals and procedures of the pilgrimage. Thereafter, people from far away lands began visiting the Kaabah for pilgrimage, making Mecca the center for the religion of the Almighty, granting the town an important place in the hearts of people.

On the other hand, jealous of its sacredness and high esteem among people, many idolatrous tribes began attacking Mecca. Before Abraha, three idolater kings of Yemen had launched assaults on the Kaabah with the intention of demolishing it. Interestingly enough, the tribe of Huzayl had a way of getting rid of their enemies by encouraging them to attack the Kaabah, knowing that any army that tried to attack the Kaabah would be doomed by Allah ﷻ. It is said that they told one of these kings of Yemen, the *Tubba*,[21] that if he were to invade the Kaabah, he could lay claim to the supposed treasure hidden inside it. Encouraged, the King attacked the Kaabah, but his attempt was thwarted as the feet of his soldiers became buried in sand. The King was then warned by his knowledgeable advisors and persuaded to retreat. On the way back, the King pledged thereafter to treat the Meccans well, supplying them with generous donations, promising also to respect the Kaabah. The assailants were thus able to salvage themselves from destruction.[22]

News of such incidents spread fast among the people of the Arabian Peninsula and the Kaabah thereby attained an awesome reputation and an esteemed place in people's eyes. The idea that Mecca, the Kaabah and the tribe of Quraysh were under Divine protection, became an accepted norm among Arabs.

Worshipping in the House of Allah ﷻ, continued the way Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام had taught up until the spread of idolatry. When idol worshipping became widespread in Mecca, the idolaters filled inside and around the Kaabah with idols. But even then the Kaabah was not renamed after a certain idol, continuing to be called *Baytullah*, the House of Allah ﷻ.[23]

When Mecca was taken and opened to Islam by the Noble Prophet ﷺ all the idols were demolished, and under the inspection of the Prophet ﷺ, the Kaabah, from both the inside and outside, was cleansed with Zamzam water. This initiated a custom of washing the Kaabah with Zamzam and rosewater every year, perfuming it with musk and amber, and renewing its cover.

21. *Tubba* is a name formerly given to the kings of Yemen.
22. See Ibn Hisham, I, 19-20; Abdurrazzaq, V,153.
23. Stuck in the swamp of ignorance, the idolaters amazingly never worshipped the three things they valued the most: the Kaabah, *Hajar'ul-Aswad* and *Maqam'u Ibrahim*, in spite worshipping various kinds of trees and stones. This can only be explained with the exclusive protection by the Almighty.

The idolatrous practice of hanging upon the walls of the Kaabah the seven most eloquent poems, the *Muallaqât al-Sab'a* (literally 'the Seven Hanged'), acclaimed in their literary contests, not to mention their hanging on the very same walls the declaration of their boycott of Muslims, attest to the immense value of the Sacred House in their eyes.

Any service made to the Kaabah and its visitors was thus held in great esteem. First fulfilled by Ismail ﷺ, these noble duties passed on to his sons, then to the Jurhumites and finally to the tribe of Quraysh. Simultaneous to the establishment of the Meccan city-state we see the founding of the following duties:

1. **Sidânah or Hijâbah:** The duty of covering the Kaabah and safeguarding its keys.[24]

2. **Siqâyah:** Providing the pilgrims with water and beverages, and the maintenance of the Zamzam well.

3. **Ridânah:** Feeding and hosting poor pilgrims.

Becoming entrusted with these duties was considered a great honor and privilege among Arabs. In the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ these duties were shared among the leading families of the Mecca. Omar ؓ, the second Caliph, allocated allowances for these purposes, which during the time of Muawiyah ؓ became more organized. The Ottomans similarly considered the upkeeping of the Kaabah as being of great significance, providing sizeable allowances for tending to the Sacred House.

The Elephant Incident: A Testimony of Divine protection

The Kaabah, built on the command of Allah ﷻ, stands under constant Divine protection. Attesting to this is the famous event known in history as the Elephant Incident, replete with lessons to be drawn from it.

Abraha, a Roman vassal and governor of Yemen, had built a big, ornamented church in Sana, hoping to divert local attention thereto. The Arabs, however, showed very little interest in the church, much to the disappointment and vexation of the Governor. To implement this program, Abraha then decided to demolish the Kaabah, their center of attraction, the Sacred House that always drew visitors.

24. Ismail ﷺ is recognized as the first person to drape the Kaabah. (Abdurrazzaq, V, 154) Throughout Islamic history, the preparation of the cover of the Kaabah would be seen to by the Caliph, a sultan or the incumbent governor of Mecca. After the passage of the Caliphate to the Ottomans in 1517, the cover of the Sacred House continued to be woven in Egypt for a little while longer. During the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, Istanbul became the center for weaving its inner cover, added to which was the outer cover, come the time of Sultan Ahmed III. The last cover woven in Ottoman hands to be sent was in 1916, with the rebellion of Sharif Hussain preventing further attempts. Prepared for a period of time once again in Egypt thereafter, the cover is today is made in a factory in Mecca set up specifically for that purpose.

Having prepared a great army that included many elephants, comparable to today's tanks, Abraha headed for Mecca to carry out his plan and render the church unrivaled in the quest for people's attention.

Near Kasbah, Abraha laid claim to some camels belonging to the Meccans, some of which belonged to Abdulmuttalib, the grandfather of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who came to Abraha to ask to have his camels back. Angered at Abdulmuttalib's concern for a few camels, Abraha lashed out:

"I have come to demolish the Kaabah and you are only concerned for your camels!"

"The Kaabah has an owner to protect it", Abdulmuttalib answered calmly.

"Nobody today shall stand in my way to protect it", Abraha then commented arrogantly.

When Abraha finally commanded his army to march on towards the Kaabah, the elephants stood their ground, unable to move forward. Suddenly, the skies were filled with birds in flight, which begun pelting the army with little stones of baked clay they were carrying with their claws. The stones struck each and everyone in the army like hailstones, destroying whatever they touched. The tiny birds were pulverizing the seemingly invincible elephants standing in tons of weight. The year in which this miraculous event took place was thereafter known by Arabs as the Year of the Elephant.

The Almighty narrates this story in the Holy Quran as follows:

اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِاَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ. اَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِى تَضْلِيلٍ. وَاَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا اَبَابِيلَ. تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ. فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَاْكُولٍ.

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant? Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray? And He sent against them Flights of Birds, Which pelted them with stones of baked clay, Then did He make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up." (al-Fîl, 1-5)

The Kaabah, the House of Goodness serving as a place of worship to one God, was all along blessed by Allah ﷻ, and kept under His protection.

The punishment exacted from Abraha for his disrespect towards the Kaabah remains in no uncertain terms a warning until the Final Hour for others who may harbor similar malice against the Sacred House.

The Quran similarly extends this value to all the mosques of Allah ﷻ.

وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللهِ اَنْ يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعٰى فِى
خَرَابِهَا اُولٰٓئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ اَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَآ اِلَّا خَآئِفِينَ لَهُمْ
فِى الدُّنْيَا خِزْىٌ وَلَهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

"And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the mosques of Allah, that His name should be remembered in them, and strives to ruin them? (As for) these, it was not proper for them that they should have entered them except in fear; they shall meet with disgrace in this world, and they shall have great chastisement in the hereafter." (al-Baqara, 114)

Blinded by his boundless arrogance, Abraha considered himself to have great power, and the punishment he was given is indeed fitting. He was not struck by beasts known for their strength like lions and tigers or even poisonous snakes but by feeble birds carrying pebbles smaller than chickpeas. The Almighty thus destroys arrogant disbelievers like the Pharaoh, Nimrod and Goliath with seemingly powerless creatures, in order to show how weak they are in reality.

Abraha was now returning to Yemen, the land he had set out from in great honor and majesty, in a very contemptible way. With his body in wounds and clothes in tatters, he was almost crawling back to his town. His plight provides a striking lesson in showing how disgrace follows the arrogant even in this world.

Called by the Quraysh the Year of Elephant, that year marked the starting point of their calendar. Qubash ibn Ushaym ﷺ, a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, for instance, used to cite the Year of Elephant in telling others how he and the Prophet ﷺ were born in the same year.

Othman ibn Affân ﷺ once inquired further as to who was bigger age wise, to which Ibn Ushaym ﷺ responded in the most polite and considerate of manners:

"The Prophet ﷺ is of course much greater than me but as far our ages are concerned, I was born before him,[25] as I remember seeing the droppings of Abraha's elephants: they were still green and little altered." (Tirmidhî, Manâqıb, 2)

25. As evident in this narration, the Companions were always conscious of the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was of the highest and most sublime rank, with regard to which they were of utmost sensitivity. Just a touch of their skin by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, for them, provided reason for gratification, as many a fortunate Companion touched by those sacred hands, would point to their own hands and say:
"It was with these two hands that I pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah!" (Ibn Saad, IV, 306; Haythami, VIII, 42)

The Hanif Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ
and the Religion of Worshipping One God

Although most of the people of Mecca had become idolaters, traces of belief in one God were not completely eradicated. A few people still practicing the religion of *tawhid*, as taught by Ibrahim ﷺ were still to be found. Ibrahim ﷺ is considered in Islam as *Khalîlullâh*, the friend of Allah, and also among the five grand Prophets, referred to as *Ulu'l-Azm*. The great-grandfather of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Ibrahim ﷺ is also known to have received ten leaves (*suhuf*) of Revelation from the Almighty.

The name Ibrahim is mentioned throughout twenty-five chapters in the Quran, at a total of sixty nine times. Some of the attributes mentioned in praise of him in these verses include *awwâh* (sigher, referring to compassion), *halîm* (forbearing) *munib* (penitent), *qanit* (excellent in servitude to the Almighty), *shakir* (thankful) and *hanîf*.

The religion of Ibrahim ﷺ is called Hanîf. It means to leave crooked ways for the right path, to give up heretical beliefs for belief in One God, and become a *muwahhid*, one who recognizes the unity of the Almighty.

The Almighty states in the Holy Quran:

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا اَوْ نَصَارٰى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ
مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"And they (Christians and Jews) say: Be Jews or Christians, you will be on the right course. Say: Nay! (we follow) the religion of Ibrahim, the Hanif, and he was not one of the idolaters**!"** (al-Baqara, 135)

مَا كَانَ اِبْرٰهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلٰكِنْ
كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Ibrahim was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man, the Hanîf who had surrendered (to Allah); and he was not of the idolaters.**"** (Âl Imrân, 67)

During the phase of Ignorance, the term Hanif was used to refer to anyone who rejected the worship of idols and, espousing belief in One God, followed the religion of Ibrahim. Included among the Hanif were people like Waraqa ibn Nawfal, Abdullâh ibn Jahsh, Othman ibn Huwayrith, Zayd ibn Amr and Quss ibn Sâida, who throughout their lives remained adamant in refusing to bow down in front of idols or pray to them as gods.

Ibn Omar ﷺ[26] narrates:

"The Prophet ﷺ was invited to a meal near the valley of Baldah;[27] this was before any Divine Revelation had come to the him. Present at the meal was also Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl. Just as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ refused to eat from the meat which he was offered, so did Zayd, who explained:

'I do not eat anything which you slaughter in the name of your stone idols. I eat nothing but that which is slaughtered in the name of Allah.'

Zayd ibn Amr was known for his criticism of the way Quraysh used to slaughter their animals, which he considered something abominable, saying:

'Allah has created the sheep, has sent the water for it from the sky, and has grown from the earth for it to eat; and yet you slaughter it in the name of another than Allah.'" (Bukhârî, Manâqıbu'l-Ansâr, 24; Dhabâih, 16)

According to another narration from Ibn Omar:

"Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl had gone to Damascus to inquire about a true religion to follow. There, he met a Jewish religious scholar and asked him about their religion.

26. Abdullah ibn Omar ﷺ was born in the 3rd year of Prophethood. He made the Hegira with his father Omar ﷺ. Along with Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, he was member of the army that was to lay siege to Istanbul. As his elder sister Hafsa ﷺ was the wife of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, he had the privilege of being in the close company of the Prophet ﷺ. A narration of 2630 hadiths, together with repetitions, makes him second to Abu Hurayrah ﷺ on the list of the *mukthirun*, the seven Companions with the most number of hadith narrations. Ibn Omar ﷺ was likewise among the seven Companions to give the most number of *fatwa*, jurisprudential verdicts.
He was second to none, however, in following the lifestyle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to the letter, in implementing his commands in their exactitude. After the passing away of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, stemming from an exuberant love for him, Ibn Omar would specifically offer salat in the exact spots where the Prophet had once offered it; he would walk the paths he had trodden, sit in the shades of trees the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to sit beneath, purposely watering them so they would not dry out. (Bukhari, Salat, 89; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isâba,* II, 349)
He once suffered a major cramp in his foot. Abdurrahman ibn Saad, next to him at the time, advised him to say the name of the person he most loved.
"Muhammad!" exclaimed Ibn Omar, immediately upon which he foot was relieved of pain. (Ibn Saad, IV, 154)
Ibn Omar ﷺ was also among the wealthiest of the Companions. That so, he would never allow his wealth to accumulate, distributing it among the poor as soon as he would get his hands on it himself. He had a habit of sparing his favorite possessions for charity in the way of the Almighty. He had also begun setting free all his slaves, who developed praiseworthy behavior, especially those who had begun to regularly perform salat. For this, Ibn Omar was cautioned by one of his friends, informing him that one of his slaves was frequenting the mosque just to be set free. Ibn Omar's response, showing the depth of Divine love in his heart, is splendid:
"We are willing to be tricked by those wishing to trick us with Allah!"
He is reputed to have set free over 1,000 slaves, for numerous reasons and under different circumstances. He passed away in Mecca in 692, (H. 73) at the age of 85

27. Baldah is a valley nearby Mecca.

'I intend to embrace your religion, so tell me something about it,' he said.

'You cannot embrace our religion unless you receive your share of the Wrath of God,' replied the Jew.

'I have not come here except from fear of His Wrath, so I cannot see myself bearing a bit of it, given I have the power to avoid it. Can you tell me of some other religion?'

'I know of no other religion except the Hanif.'

'What is the Hanif?' then Zayd further asked.

'Hanif is the religion of the Prophet Ibrahim, neither a Jew nor a Christian, who used to worship Allah alone', explained the Jewish scholar.

Zayd then headed out and met a Christian scholar and stated the exact concern.

'You shall not embrace our religion unless you get a share of the Curse of God,' the Christian responded.

'I run from none other than His Curse, and I will never bear any of it so long as I have the power to avoid it. Can you tell me of some other religion?' Zaid asked.

'I do not know of any other religion except Hanif.'

'Which is…?'

'It is the religion of the Prophet Ibrahim who was neither a Jew nor a Christian and who worshipped none but Allah'.

Hearing similar words from both regarding the religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام, Zayd left that place, and raised both his hands to the skies, as he came out, and said:

'O Allah! Bear witness that I am in the religion of Ibrahim.'" (Bukhârî, Manâqıbu'l-Ansâr, 24)

Asma bint Abi Bakr رضي الله عنها reports to have seen Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl, standing with his back against the Kaabah, declaring:

"People of Quraysh! By Allah, none among you is in the religion of Ibrahim except for me."

She adds that Zayd took great care to preserve the lives of little girls, salvaging their lives from a horrific death. Upon seeing a man with the intention of slaying his daughter, he would intervene and say:

"Do not kill her! I will feed her on your behalf." So he would take her and look after her, and when she would grow up, Zayd would say to her father:

"If you want her now, I will give her to you, and if you wish, I will keep on looking after her on your behalf." (Bukhârî, Manâqıbu'l-Ansâr, 24)

As regards Waraqa, another prominent Hanif, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

"I see him walking around in Paradise in a silk gown."

And about Zayd:

"He will be resurrected in the Hereafter as a separate nation between me and Isa." (Haythamî, IX, 416)

With knowledge of the previous Sacred Books, the Hanîfs had a feel that the approach the Final Prophet ﷺ was near and they were waiting in longing anticipation.

Most Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the parents of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were also among the Hanîf, a religion that is nothing but belief in the one true God, in *tawhid*. Such is why the Almighty commands the observance of the religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام, the quintessential Hanif, in the following verse:

ثُمَّ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ اَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Ibrahim, the upright one; he was not of the idolaters." (an-Nahl, 16:123)

The term Hanif is also used to signify Islam and every sincere Muslim is thus also called a Hanîf. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ states, in confirmation:

"I was sent with the forebearing Hanif religion." (Ahmad, V, 266)[28]

28. Also see, Bukhari, Iman, 29.

The Prophet
-upon him blessings and peace-
Period of Prophethood

CHAPTER ONE

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED PROPHET

The Muhammedan Light

We cannot think of time and space for Allah ﷻ, who transcends all dimensions.[29] Existent in pre-eternity, His existence comes from Himself without need for any other. That stated, the Almighty nonetheless willed to be known and hence created existence, the world of plurality (*âlam'ul-kasrat*), which is also called *mâ siwallâh*, denoting anything other than Allah ﷻ.[30] In the process of creation, He first created a light that is the essence of *Haqîqat'ul- Muhammadiya*, the Muhammedan Reality.

A precious gem is kept in an ornamented box, not a rudimentary one. Seen in this respect, the Muhammedan Light is the precious gem hidden in the rest of creation, the ornamented box serving to preserve it. Beings were created only for the sake of his greatness. It could therefore be said that Allah ﷻ, created existence to ornament the Muhammedan Light. In the language of divinity, the Almighty is the origin of creation, possessing absolute freedom to do anything He wills, while the cause is the Muhammedan Light, the first creation.

Contrary to the claims of some philosophers, the universe is not eternal and uncreated, on the contrary, it is fashioned by Allah ﷻ. Only the Almighty is uncreated and timeless. Created first was the Muhammedan Light, which sheds light on the hadith below:

"I was a Prophet when Adam was between soul and body (i.e. when Adam's creation was in its preliminary stages)" (at-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir; Al Khasa'is al-Kubra,* vol.1, p.4). (Tirmidhî, Manâqib, 1)

In other words, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was created and thus entrusted with the mission of prophethood well before the creation of Adam عليه السلام. His bodily manifestation on Earth, however, marks the final page of the book that is prophetic history, which means that the first page of that very book was turned with the

29. The human mind is of a nature that can think only within the bounds of space and time. Through the impressions it receives from the physical world, it can, albeit to a certain degree, reach Truth. Bound by the impressions received from the world of observation to refer to the truths that transcend the observational realm, both in terms designating and insinuating the content of metaphysical truths, man is thus virtually compelled to resort to metaphor.

30. *Ma siwallah* is a term used to indicate all that which is *other than* Allah ﷻ, and which keeps one away from Him.

Muhammedan Light and similarly came to a close with the embodiment of Muhammad ﷺ as a Prophet on the physical plane.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is thus the Light of Creation, from whom beings borrow their value, a fact elaborated in the hadith below:

"When Adam was ejected from Paradise due to his sin, he asked forgiveness from Allah through the words: 'Forgive me, my Lord, for the sake of Muhammad!'

'How do you know Muhammad's name when I have not yet created him?' the Almighty asked.

'When you created me, my Lord, and breathed into me Your spirit, I raised my head and saw the words *Lâ ilâhe illAllâh, Muhammedun Rasûlullâh* inscribed above the pillars of the Throne. I therefore thought that You would only mention Your name with the Most Beloved of Your creation.'

'I forgive you, Adam', the Almighty declared, 'and were it not for Muhammad I surely would not have created you.'" (Hâkim, II, 672)

Narrated from Ibn Abbas, Allah ﷻ, inspired Isa ﷺ to "Believe in Muhammad and command those who live in his time from among your community to believe in him. For were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created Adam; neither would I have created Paradise and Hell. When I created the Throne (*Arsh*) on water, it started rocking, coming to a standstill only after I wrote over it *Lâ ilâhe illâllâh Muhammedun Rasûlullâh*". (Hâkim, II, 672)

Jabir ﷺ is reported to have one day asked the Prophet ﷺ:

"May my father and mother be ransomed for you Messenger of Allah! Could you please tell me what the first created thing was?"

"The first thing Allah created was the Light of your Messenger from His Own Light." [31]

Ibn Arabi affords the following comments in regard:

"When Allah almighty heralded Muhammad ﷺ with Prophethood, Adam was not fully created; he was in a state between water and mud. Thus, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ effectively became, at once, the foremost core of all Divine laws (*sharia*) to transpire through prophets thereafter. Even as early as then, he had a *sharia*, as the Prophet indicates in the hadith that he was a Messenger when Adam was still in a state between spirit and body; he does not say he was a 'man' or that he simply existed. Prophethood may only be through a law, a *sharia*, given by the Almighty." (Ibn Arabi, al-Futuhat, II, 171; IV, 66-67)

31. See Ajlunî, I, 265.

In another famous work, Ibn Arabî says:

"Being the most perfected of all human species, Prophethood thus began and ended with the Messenger of Allah." (Ibn Arabî, *Fusûsu'l-Hikem,* IV, 319)

In his *Mathnawi*, Rumi states:

"Come, o heart! The true festival is unity with Muhammad, his Majesty; for the luminosity of the universe is from the light of his sacred being."

Sulayman Chelebi also makes mention of the Muhammadan Light in his *Mawlid*:

Mustafâ nûrunu evvel kıldı vâr
Sevdi ânı ol Kerîm ü Girdigâr[32]
The Light of Mustapha, He first made,
Which He loved, the Generous, the Great.

Thus the Muhammadan Light, labeled also as the Muhammedan Truth, is an essence that represents the spiritual identity of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. It is he who is the most beloved and the most precious in the sight of the Creator. The reason for the existence of creation is the love of the Almighty towards the Muhammedan Light, the first entity created. The entire universe has therefore been given existence in the honor of the Muhammadan Light, the core which it envelops. Existence is only to expose and explain his reality. Having said that, just as it is impossible to pour an ocean into a cup, it is inconceivable to understand the Muhammadan Light as befits its nature.

The Pure Lineage of the Prophet ﷺ

The Noble Prophet's ﷺ father is Abdullah and his mother is Aminah, a blessed lineage stemming from Ibrahim and Ismail عليهما السلام through Adnan,[33] the most honorable member of the Kayzar family.[34] Adnan's son Meadd is said to be a contemporary of Isa عليه السلام.

Both maternally and paternally, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ belonged to the purest family of Quraysh, a purity of lineage confirmed by the Prophet ﷺ himself in the following hadith:

32. The other couplets of Sulayman Chalabi's *Mawlid* pay further lyrical tribute to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ being the Light of Existence and that the universe was created but in honor of the Muhammedan Light.
33. The lineage of the Noble Messenger ﷺ is: Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdulmuttalib ibn Hâshim ibn Abdi Menaf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilâb ibn Murra ibn Kaab ibn Luay ibn Ghalib ibn Fihr ibn Malik ibn Nadr ibn Kinâna ibn Huzayma ibn Mudrika ibn Ilyas ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Ma'add ibn Adnan. (Bukhari, Manaqıbu'l-Ansar, 28 Ibn Hisham, I, 1-3; Ibn Saad, I, 55-56)
34. See Ibn Hisham, I, 1, 5.

"I was born from my mother and father without being marred by any of the evils of the Period of Ignorance. From Adam عليه السلام to my mother and father, every preceding member of lineage was conceived by none other than religiously legal marriage, never from fornication." (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidâya,* II, 260)

Another name of the Prophet ﷺ is Mustapha, meaning one who is delicately chosen. Whenever there was a split of lineage, the forefathers of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ always succeeded from among the better of the two. Since Adam and Hawwa, therefore, the Prophetic Light passed on through the purest of mothers and fathers, from one generation to another.[35]

The *ayah* "And rely on the Almighty, the Merciful, Who sees you when you rise up, and your descending among those who fall prostrate in worship", (al-Shuara, 217-219) was understood by a number of commentators, including Ibn Abbas, as a reference to the descent of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ through his ancestors, all of whom were men of utmost piety; that is until reaching him, the light of the Prophet ﷺ was transmitted only through those who fell prostrate to Allah ﷻ. (Qurtubî, XIII, 144, Haythamî, VIII, 214)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ confirmed his pure lineage also through the following:

"Allah ﷻ, chose Ismail from among the sons of Ibrahim, the Kinana clan from among the descendants of Ismail, Quraysh from among the sons of Kinana, the sons of Hashim from among Quraysh, and the sons of Abdulmuttalib from among Hashim; and me from among the sons of Abdulmuttalib." (Muslim, Fadâil, 1; Tirmidhî, Manâqib, 1)

Regarding the well-known purity of genealogy of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his eminent forefathers, the great Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun affords the following remarks:

"No other person than Prophet Muhammed ﷺ has a well recorded lineage that is moreover blessed with uninterrupted purity and nobility since Adam عليه السلام. This is a special gift to His Beloved by the Almighty." (Ibn Khaldun, I, 115)

The Marriage of Abdullah and Aminah, the Parents of the Prophet

Before the advent of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, belief in One God was all but lost and the Kaabah was filled with idols that belonged to different tribes. The well of Zamzam had also been lost. One day while asleep near the Kaabah, Abdulmuttalib, the grandfather of Blessed Prophet ﷺ, saw a dream where he was shown the font of Zamzam which he was commanded to dig. But when he made an attempt to

35. See Ahmad, I, 210.

dig in hope of bringing the dream to fruition, he was prevented by the people of Quraysh, on the grounds that it would be horrendous to dig anywhere near the Sacred Temple.

Since he had only one son to help him, Abdulmuttalib was apprehensive about having no power to resist them. He therefore prayed to Allah ﷻ, and made a *nadhr*, a vow, that he would sacrifice one of his sons if the Almighty gave him ten to help him against his enemies in this cause.

Upon seeing some miraculous signs transpire in Abdulmuttalib, the Meccans softened after a while and gave him permission to dig the well. He eventually went ahead to dig and unearthed the font of Zamzam. Years later his prayer was also granted, where he was given twelve sons by the Almighty, who all grew up to be strong, protective men. Abdulmuttalib was then reminded of the vow he had made years ago in his dream. Uneasy, Abdulmuttalib first sacrificed a ram then a cow, only to be asked each time for a greater sacrifice, until being finally reminded at the end:

"You had vowed to sacrifice one of your sons!"

Upon this, Abdulmuttalib gathered all his sons around him and explaining his dream to them, he invited them all to submit to what the dream compelled him to do. In full submission, they said:

"Do what you have to do to fulfill your vow!"

To fulfill his vow, Abdul-Muttalib then decided to cast a lot to determine the son he was to sacrifice, pleading the Almighty as he did:

"O Lord! Here I am, casting lots to show I am sticking to my word. Now please, let me draw the name you want to be drawn!"

The lot was cast and it was Abdullah's name that came out. Though Abdullah was the dearest to him, Abdulmuttalib did not flinch from carrying out the verdict of fate. Afraid that it could initiate an evil tradition however, the Meccans strongly opposed Abdulmuttalib, persuading him to consult a knowledgeable man. So they all went to a wise man and told him the story.

"What is the blood money for a person killed?" the knowledgeable man asked.

"Ten camels", they replied.

The knowledgeable man then advised the Meccans to cast lots between Abdullah and ten camels, and if it just happened that Abdullah's name was drawn yet again, to add ten more camels to the bloodmoney until a camel was drawn from the lot.

So they cast lots, as advised, between ten camels and Abdullah. Abdullah's name was repeatedly drawn from the lots until the number of the camels reached a hundred, which is when the name of camels was eventually drawn. The family was jubilant but Abdulmuttalib was still not satisfied, thinking it would be unfair to ignore the fact of drawing Abdullah's name ten times as opposed to just the one lot of camels. He therefore repeated another three times the lot between Abdullah and a hundred camels, and much to the satisfaction of Abdulmuttalib, the lot of the camels were drawn each time. Everyone present glorified the Almighty for this fortunate result. Abdulmuttalib then sacrificed all the camels, distributing their meat in charity.[36]

In Islamic Law today, the blood money for a person killed is either a hundred camels or their worth, a jurisdiction that is derived from this very precedent. In memory of the near sacrifice of his father and his great grandfather Ismail عليه السلام, the Noble Prophet ﷺ has stated:

"I am the son of the two sacrifices." (Hâkim, II, 609/4048)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thus given the name "the son of two sacrifices."[37]

Abdullah was the most handsome man in his tribe, surpassing them all also in intelligence and moral perfection.[38] All the girls of Quraysh desired to marry him. One of them was the sister of Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who seeing the light on the forehead of Abdullah, realized that it belonged the light of the impending Prophet. She hence wanted to be the mother of the Prophet impatiently waited for, even offering the young Abdullah a hundred camels as dowry.[39]

A year before "the Year of the Elephant", Abdulmuttalib asked, for his son Abdullah, the hand of Aminah, the daughter of Abdimenaf, the best of Quraysh in terms of honor and ancestry. The proposal was welcomed and their marriage soon took place. Aminah's ancestry, through her father Wahb ibn Abdimenaf, reaches Zuhrah, the son of Kilab, the son of Murrah, whereby it merges with the ancestry of the Abdullah and the Hashim clan, with Kilab, whose son Zuhrah was the brother of Qusay.[40]

When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was conceived, the light on the forehead of Abdullah passed on to Aminah.[41]

36. See Ibn Hisham; I, 163-168; Ibn Saad, I, 83-85; Hakim, II, 604/4036.
37. See Hakim, II, 604/4036.
38. See Halabî, I, 51-62.
39. See Ibn Hisham, I, 168-169.
40. See Ibn Saad, I, 59-60.
41. See Ibn Hisham, I, 170.

The Passong Away of Abdullah

A short while after the marriage, Abdullah went on a trade journey to Damascus. On the way back, he fell sick. When they reached Madina, he told his friends it would be best for him to stay next to his maternal uncles in the town for a while until he recuperated.

Even though he stayed in Madina for a month, recuperation from the illness was never to be, and he finally breathed his last in the town where he was to be buried at twenty five years of age.[42]

Aminah shed tears of sorrow for days on end for her deceased husband, chanting eulogies in praise of how much he was loved by everyone, and celebrating his matchless generosity and mercy.[43]

Events Heralding the Birth of the Prophet

Divine signs indicating the great birth started to become manifest well before the delivery of the Blessed Prophet. Every inch of the universe was yearning for the embodiment of very cause behind their creation.

The pledges taken by the Almighty from previous Prophets that they will recognize Muhammad ﷺ as a Prophet and help him should he appear in their lifetimes could be considered as the greatest sign attesting to his advent. The following verse confirms that:

وَاِذْ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيّٖنَ لَمَآ اٰتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهٖ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ ءَاَقْرَرْتُمْ وَاَخَذْتُمْ عَلٰى ذٰلِكُمْ اِصْرِى قَالُٓوا اَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَاَنَا۠ مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

"Behold! Allah took the covenant of the Prophets, saying: 'I give you a Book and Wisdom; then comes to you a messenger, confirming what is with you; do ye believe in him and render him help.' Allah said: 'Do you agree, and take this My Covenant as binding on you?' They said: 'We agree.' He said: 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.'" (Âl İmrân, 81)

Raising their hands to the heavens, Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail عليهما السلام also prayed for the arrival of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ after completing the building of the Kaabah.

42. See Ibn Saad, I, 99.
43. See Ibn Saad, I, 100.

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"Our Lord! Raise up a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Your communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them. Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise!" (al-Baqara, 129)

Similarly, while informing the Israelites of his Prophethood, Prophet Isa عليه السلام also gives the glad tidings of the coming of the final Prophet.

وَاِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِى اِسْرَآئِيلَ اِنِّى رَسُولُ اللهِ اِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَىَّ مِنَ التَّوْرٰيةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَاْتِى مِنْ بَعْدِى اسْمُهٗٓ اَحْمَدُ

"And remember, Isa, the son of Maryam, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad…" (es-Saff, 6)

Wile still pregnant, Aminah saw a dream in which she heard:

"You are pregnant, Aminah, with the master of the *Ummah*. When you give birth to him pray to Allah and say, 'I seek refuge with Allah, the One, from the evil of the envious when he envies' and give him the name 'Muhammad'.[44]

In memory of these, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated:

"I am the answer to the prayer of my grandfather Ibrahim, the good news given by Jesus and the dream of my mother." (Hâkim, II, 453; Ahmad, IV, 127-128)

The Prophet's name and attributes were also explicitly written in both the Torah and the Gospel, with which the scholars of both texts were fully informed at the time. Those among them who had it in their hearts to acknowledge this were praised in the Quran:

اَلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِىَّ الْاُمِّىَّ الَّذِى يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِى التَّوْرٰيةِ وَالْاِنْجِيلِ

"Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them …" (al-Arâf, 7:157)

44. See Ibn Hisham, I, 170.

Because they knew the characteristics of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, they recognized him with the ease a father would recognize his son, as confirmed by the following verse:

اَلَّذِينَ اٰتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ اَبْنَآءَ
هُمْ وَاِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

"Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons, and a party of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it)." (al-Baqara, 2:146)

Upon becoming a Muslim, Abdullah ibn Selâm ﷺ who was a great scholar of the Torah, said:[45]

"I recognize the Messenger of Allah ﷺ better than I would my own son."

Inquiring further was Omar ﷺ:

"How is that so?"

"I can without any doubt bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, purely because his characteristics are clearly written in the Torah", he answered.

Hearing this, Omar remarked, "The Almighty has indeed given you the truth." (Vâhidî, s. 47; Râzî, *Tefsîr,* IV, 116)

The Holy Quran testifies that both the Torah and the Gospel describe the characteristics of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as well as his companions:

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهٗٓ اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرٰيهُمْ
رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِى وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ
اَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِى التَّوْرٰيةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِى الْاِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ اَخْرَجَ شَطْئَهُ

45. Abdullah ibn Salam ﷺ, also known as Abu Yusuf, is a descendant of Yusuf ﷺ. Called Husayn by birth, his name was later changed to Abdullah by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. He was a scholar of the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa. Once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ arrived at Quba, near Medina, during the Hegira, Abdullah went there and posed a few questions to him. The responses, he thought, could only have been given by a Prophet, on which grounds he immediately entered Islam. He later proved instrumental in the acceptance of Islam by his entire family and many of his relatives. Given the glad tidings of Paradise by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ while still alive, Abdullah ibn Salam was a highly respected Companion. It is said that the 10th *ayah* of Ahqaf and the 43rd of Rad were revealed in relation to him. Having narrated 25 hadiths, he breathed his last in Medina, in 663 (H. 43), when Muawiya was caliph.

فَاٰزَرَهٗ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوٰى عَلٰى سُوْقِهٖ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيْظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ
وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Torah and their description in the Gospel; like as seed-produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them; Allah has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward" (al-Fath, 48:29)

Abdullah ibn Abbâs ﷺ one day asked Kâb al-Ahbâr[46] to tell him of the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ mentioned in the Torah.

"Mentioned therein are the following characteristics: Muhammad ibn Abdullah will be born in Mecca and will migrate to Medina. He will eventually seize Damascus. Never will he speak foul words, nor will he raise his voice in public. He will not retaliate against evil with evil and will forgive the culprits. His people will offer their thanks to Allah and glorify Him in good times and bad. They will wash their arms (make *wudu*, ablution) and stand in lines in prayer like in battles. Constantly heard from their places of worship will be a buzz (the recital of the Quran and chanting the names of Allah). Their call to prayer will fill the sky." (Dârimî, Muqaddima, 2)

Atâ ibn Yasâr -rahimahullâh- narrates:

"I came across Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As[47] and asked him to tell me about the description of Allah's Messenger in the Torah.

'By Allah, he is indeed described in the Torah with some of the qualities attributed to him in the Quran. It is said in the Torah that:

46. Kâ'b al-Ahbâr –Allah have mercy on him-, of the *tabiun* generation, is famous for his narrations from the books of the Israelites. He became a Muslim during the time of Abu Bakr ﷺ, passing away in the 32nd year of Hegira.

47. Abdullah ibn Amr ibn As ﷺ immigrated to Medina in the 7th year of Hegira, with his father Amr, whom he preceded in accepting Islam. He was a literate Companion, well-versed with the cultures of the past. He would write the hadiths he heard from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, for which the Prophet ﷺ had given him special permission. His vast knowledge of hadith and jurisprudence makes him one of the four Abdullahs, or the *Abadila*, recognized for their depth in regard. A member of the army that conquered Damascus, Abdullah also fought in the Battle of Yarmuk where he was the flagbearer of the army of Believers commanded by his father Amr ﷺ. He settled in Egypt following its conquest, with his father, where he remained for the remainder of his life, eventually breathing his last at the age of 72. He was buried near the Amr ibn As Mosque in Cairo where he remains today.

'O Prophet ! We have sent you as a witness for Allah's True religion, a giver of glad tidings to faithful believers, a warner to unbelievers and as a guardian of the illiterate. You are My slave and My Messenger. I have named you *al-Mutawakkil* (who depends upon Allah). You are neither discourteous, harsh nor a noise-maker in public. You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them forgivingly and kindly. Allah will not let you die until, through you, He straightens the crooked by making them admit that none has the right to be worshipped besides Allah; and through this which will blind eyes, deaf ears and hearts of stone be opened to the truth." (Bukhârî, Buyû, 50; Tafsîr, 48/ 3)

Aware of all the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ, the Jews were in anxious anticipation of his advent. So much so that whenever the Jews had a quarrel with the Madinan tribes Aws and Khazraj, they would threaten them, telling that their days were numbered, since the with the expected Prophet, whose arrival was now looming and whom the Jews would follow, would signal the end of the two tribes who would be eradicated just like the tribes of Ad and Iram. (Ibn Asîr, *el-Kâmil,* II, 95-96)

But as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was not of Jewish blood, the Jews never came around to accepting him in their entirety. Striking is the following story narrated by Safiya bint Huyay, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ and a Jew before Islam.

"When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reached the village of Quba during the migration to Madinah, my father and my uncle rushed to see him. They returned only around sunset, sad and dejected, however. I heard them say the following to one another.

'So you think he is the expected Prophet?' asked Huyayy, my father.

'By God he is!' said my uncle, Abu Yâsir.

'But are you sure? Did you confirm it with other proofs?' asked my father once more.

'Yes!' was the reply.

'So how do feel towards him now?' asked Abu Yasir in turn after a momentary pause.

'By Allah as long as I am alive I will foster only enmity towards him in my heart,' replied my father." (Abû Nuaym, *Delâil,* I, 77-78)

The Jews were envious of the Arabs because the last Prophet had emerged from among them, and not from Jewish stock. All along, they had anxiously expected him to be raised from among them. On these grounds they rejected his prophethood.[48]

48. See Ibn Saad, I, 155.

Ibn Abbâs ﷺ is another who recounts the Jews' hostile attitude:

"Warring continuously with the tribe of Ghatafan, the Jews of Khaybar almost always used to wind up defeated. So they prayed to the Almighty:

'Our Lord! We ask victory from you for the sake of the Prophet you promised to send towards the end of time.' By asking for Divine assistance in the name of the Prophet (*tawassul*), the Jews were at last able to gain victory over the tribe of Ghatafan. Yet even though they had received help using his name, they did not accept the Final Prophet when sent by the Almighty. So to chastise them the following verse was revealed:

وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

"…although from of old they had prayed for victory (fort he sake of the Prophet that would come soon) against those without Faith,- when there comes to them that which they (should) have recognized (the Prophet Muhammad), they refuse to believe in him; but the curse[49] of Allah is on those without Faith.**"** (al-Baqara, 89) (Qurtubî, II, 27; Wâhidî, p. 31)

The following incident is also noteworthy in indicating the arrival of the Blessed Prophet into the world:

Sayf ibn Zî-Yazan was appointed the king of Yemen by the Persian Khosrau. The representatives of the entire Arab tribes came to congratulate him. The mission sent by the Meccans consisted of ten people and was headed by Abdulmuttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet ﷺ.

In the presence of the King, Abdulmuttalib said:

"We are the people and the servants of the protected House of Allah. We have come to congratulate you for your accession to the throne."

They were warmly welcomed by the King of Yemen and were lodged for some time as his guests. One day the King summoned Abdulmuttalib and said:

49. Both in the Holy Quran and in the ahadith of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, some of which we will see in due course, we find the cursing of certain ingrained sinners, without reference to any particular person or persons. Curses, here, are aimed at morally deviant notions, behavior and practices. That the Blessed Prophet chose to curse despite avowing "…I have not been sent as an imprecator but as a mercy" (Muslim, Birr, 87) only indicates the severity of the behavior of the kind and its grave consequences on Islamic life and social structure.

"I am going to tell you a secret, Abdulmuttalib. Had it been anybody else other than you, I would not have said it, but it is only because there is something about you I sense. Keep this between us until the Almighty wills it to be exposed. Only His Will is realized. We have a book, the contents of which only we know and in it there are important news closely concerning you and your friends."

"Even if it means these nomads are to die in your path, please tell me…What is this important news?" insisted Abdulmuttalib.

"A boy will be born in the area of Tihâma. He will be the leader of mankind until the Final Hour and your people will reap the honor. As a sign there will be mole between his shoulder blades."

King Sayf ibn Zi-Yazan continued:

"The time of his birth has come. Who knows? He may have already been born. His name is Muhammad. His parents are to die and his grandfather and uncle will see to his care. The Almighty has sent him as a clear caller onto His path and will make some of us his helpers. Through them, the Almighty will debase the enemies of this Prophet and dignify his friends. He will capture the best parts of the world. The Magian fire will be extinguished with his birth. People will in his time worship *al-Rahman*, the One True God. Disbelief and extremities will be banned, idols will be destroyed and the Satan will be stoned. His words will differentiate true and false. His judgments will always be just. He will always command the good and will practice it first himself. Evil will be prohibited and falsehood will be destroyed."

Abdulmuttalib asked:

"May Allah extend your life and honor! May your rule be everlasting! What you describe is my lineage. Can the King make this man happier by giving more detail about this child?"

"By the enshrouded House of Allah, by all the miracles and heavenly Scriptures, it is no lie that you are the forefather of this baby", Sayf replied.

Abdulmuttalib fell to the ground in jubilation.

"Raise your head. May your heart be at peace, your life long and your name exalted! Tell me…Is there anything that you are aware of from the signs that I have told you?" asked the King.

"Yes…I had a son who I used to dearly love and treasure. I had him married to Aminah, daughter of one of the most honorable of my people. She gave birth to a child. I named him Muhammad. He has a mole between his shoulder blades. He furthermore carries all the signs you say. Both his parents are deceased. His uncle and I have taken his care upon ourselves", explained Abdulmuttalib.

"Protect the child very well", advised the King. "Be wary of the Jews as they have enmity towards him. But the Almighty will not give them the opportunity. Do not mention what I have said to your friends, for I fear they might get jealous of the superiority granted to you and inflict trouble upon your grandchild. If only I knew I would survive to see the day he becomes a Prophet, I would march on with my cavalry and infantry to seize Yathrib (Medinah) and make it the capital of my realm and prepare it for his migration. If only I could be the one protecting him from troubles and adversaries! Bring me back news of him in a year's time!"

Sayf ibn Zi-Yazan was unfortunately killed within a year.[50] (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 26-28; Diyarbakri, I, 239-241)

Another piece of good news Abdulmuttalib received regarding the future of his grandchild runs as follows:

While playing with fellow children, the young Muhammad ﷺ had one day gone as far as the Radm quarters. There, a group from the clan of Mudlij called him and inspected the child's feet and footprints. Thereupon Abdulmuttalib arrived. They hugged him and asked:

"Is this child yours?"

"He is my son", answered he.

"Protect him closely, for we have never before seen footprints that resemble those of Ibrahim near the Kaabah more than his", they advised.

Abdulmuttalib urged his son Abu Talib nearby to give ear to their words. It was owing to such concerns that Abu Talib was so protective of his nephew.[51]

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50. That the coming of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and certain of his attributes were expressed in both the Torah and the Bible, indicates they were of Divine origin to begin with, and that in spite of their distortion, they still retain a shade of authenticity. Therefore, even though Muslims do not regard these books as any longer valid, they nonetheless do not in any way act with disrespect towards them.
Like the Torah and the Bible, the coming of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ has also been heralded in the scriptures considered sacred by the religions of the East, like Zoroastrianism, Hinduism and Buddhism. In the Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, the Noble Messenger ﷺ is referred to as *Saoshyant*, a term which means 'mercy to the worlds', where he is mentioned as the Prophet of entire humankind, in addition to many of his attributes. The Hindu Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas speak, among other things, of how the Seal of the Prophets will proclaim the beard as *sunnah* and prohibit the consumption of pork. Buddhist texts similarly contain many sections dwelling on the attributes of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in celebration of his future arrival. (See Remzi Kaya, *İlâhî Kitaplarda Hazret-i Muhammed*, p. 221-239; A. H. Viyarthi - U. Ali, *Doğu Kutsal Metinlerinde Hazret-i Muhammed,* İstanbul, 1997; İbrâhim Cânan, XIV, 79-81)
Considering that the first religion on Earth was the true religion and that thousands of prophets were sent to guide mankind intermittently whenever they digressed from the true path, it is really not surprising to stumble upon truths, like the heralding of the final Prophet, still extant in falsified beliefs like Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and many others.

51. See Abû Nuaym, *Dalâil,* I, 165; Ibn Saad, I, 118.

Before the Noble Messenger ﷺ honored the world with his presence, the entire globe was plunged in spiritual darkness. People were drowning in swamps of crass ignorance. Humanity had all but lost its dignity. Even beasts had had enough of human atrocities. Life had become unbearable. The universe was dark, human beings were in misery and hearts were aching. The weak had long forgotten how to smile. Only the strong exercised the right to live. In the words of Mehmed Akif:

Mankind had surpassed hyenas in ferocity,
Weak, devoured by his brothers one would be.
The Quran echoes this in the following:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِى الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِى النَّاسِ

"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return." (ar-Rum, 41)

As the sublime birth approached, everything, living and nonliving, grew in excitement and longing in their wait for the coming of that Great Light to save them from darkness, thirsting for him to offer them the elixir of life. Entire mankind was waiting, having already received the providential signs of his advent.

By giving poetic expression to Amina's state at the time of the sublime arrival, Suleyman Chelebi, in his *Mawlid* articulates that even the sun revolves around the Blessed Prophet ﷺ from love, like a moth around a flame:

'I saw', the Beloved's mother said,
'A light so unique, the sun its moth,
Angels descended from the skies in line,
And like the Kaabah, orbited my home
'No other like your son', they said,
Has come since the world was formed
The King of knowledge divine he is,
With secrets of wisdom and unity adorned…'

The Sublime Birth and the Occurrence of Extraordinary Events

Around the break of dawn on Monday, 12th of Rabiulawwal, corresponding to the 20th of April, 571 on the Solar Calendar, the Awaited Light at long last honored the world of manifestation with his gracious presence, as the child of Amina and Abdullah.

It was like all things had virtually come to life to say, in jubilation:

"Welcome, Messenger of Allah!"

Suleyman Chelebi expresses the joyous feelings shared by all things in the universe in celebration of this birth of grace:

Welcome…O great sultan,
One adorned with wisdom…Welcome!
Welcome, o secret of Discerning
The cure to all ailing…Welcome!
Welcome, o mercy to all worlds
Relief for all sinners, welcome!

His appearance marked the overflow of Divine compassion across the universe. Days and night virtually changed color. Feelings grew deeper. Words and tastes became boundless. Everything gained a different meaning, a unique grace. Idols shook and collapsed. The pillars and towers of the palaces of Madayin, home to Khosraus, crumbled. The Lake of Sawa, or Tabariya,[52] deemed sacred at the time, dried up like a swamp of oppression.[53]

This spatio-temporal manifestation was the first grace of the appearance of that Noble Being, a grace that encompassed the entire universe. That year was henceforth to be known as the Year of Abundance. It is of little wonder that the righteous consider the most precious night after the Night of Qadr, as that in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ graced the Earth. A poet said:

Let not the gardener take pains to water the rose garden, for even
Watering a thousand gardens could not bloom a face like yours.

The sublime coming of the Rose of roses changed the course of everything. Like beads of pearls, manifestations of Divine mercy were sprinkled across the universe, immersing in bliss hearts that longed for the Light.

The following is narrated from Ibn Abbas ﷺ:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was born on a Monday, entrusted with Prophethood on a Monday, departed Mecca for Medina on a Monday, arrived there again on a Monday and breathed his last on a Monday. It was a Monday when he arbitrated near the Kaabah the dispute regarding the replacement of the Black Stone. He was triumphant at Badr on a Monday; and the verse اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ 'Today I have perfected your religion…' (al-Maida, 3) was revealed on none other than a Monday." (Ahmad, I, 277; Haythami, I, 196)

52. Sawa was a lake 12 km to the southwest of Tahran, between Hamadan and Qum. The town of Sawa was founded on the very lake once it became desiccated.
53. See Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 273.

That his birth, prophethood, Hegira and passing away all coincided as part of Divine manifestation with Monday, is a sign of the importance of that day, wherein joyous excitement and painful sorrow, jubilation and grief were experienced together.

Certain extraordinary incidents came to pass in the sacred night in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ graced the universe, some of which will be mentioned now.

According to her own statement, neither during her pregnancy, nor while in labor did Aminah undergo any difficulty; and as the Blessed Messenger ﷺ made his way to the world, she saw a light coming out of her that illumined East and West. The Noble Child was delivered as pure as can be, with his hands placed on the ground and head turned to the sky.[54]

Iblis thereupon let out a piercing shriek, louder than he had ever done before.[55]

Mubazan, the high priest of Persia, saw a dream where a pack of wild camels, driving a flock of horses in their wake, were crossing the Tigris and spreading across the Persian land.

The Samawa Valley was flooded.[56]

Fourteen pillars from the palace of the Khousrau of Persia collapsed.

The great fire that had burnt ceaselessly for a thousand years in the Persian temple was snuffed out.[57]

According to the word of Aisha ﷺ, on the night of the Sublime Birth, a Jewish trader from Mecca saw the rising of a star which he recognized as an indication of the awaited arrival, whereupon he went to one of Quraysh's meeting spots, asking:

"Is there any one of you whose wife gave birth to a child tonight?"

"Not that we know of", they said.

"Listen to me carefully now, Quraysh", then remarked the Jew. "The Prophet of the Final Era is supposed to have been born tonight. Between his shoulder blades is a mole, a blend of black and yellow, covered with hair."

Amazed at the words of the Jew, those present separated, going their own way. Upon returning home, they told of the encounter to their families, some of whom remarked:

"A boy by the name of Muhammad was born tonight…the son of Abdullah."

54. Ibn Saad, I, 102, 150.
55. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 271.
56. Samawa is a sandy desert 235 kms to the southeast of Baghdad, near Kalb, which is roughly between Kufa and Damascus.
57. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 273.

Thereupon they went to the Jew's house.

"A child was born in Mecca. Have you heard?" they asked.

"Was he born before or after my informing you?"

"Before; and his name is Ahmad!"

The Jew requested to be taken to Aminah's house. She showed the sacred baby to them. Seeing with his own eyes the Seal of Prophethood between the baby's shoulder blades, the Jew fainted. When he regained his senses, he was asked what had happened.

"By God, Prophethood has now left the Children of Israel. So has the Scripture! It is written that the Last Prophet will defeat the Jews and destroy the reputation of their scholars. Arabs shall attain a grand honor and dignity through Prophethood. Rejoice Quraysh; for by God, you are set to acquire a might whose legend shall resonate through East and West." (Ibn Saad, I, 162-163; Hakim, II, 657/4177)

All Meccans were happy with the birth of the Blessed Child. Even Abu Lahab awarded the slave girl Suwaybah, who brought him the good news of his nephew's birth, by setting her free.[58]

Ibn Abbas ﷺ provides the following account in relation:

"I saw Abu Lahab in my dream a year after his death. He was in a horrid state.

'What is your state?' I asked him.

'My punishment is lightened on Monday's, for setting free Suwaybah in joy of Muhammad's birth. That day I am provided with refreshment with water that sprinkles forth from the small hole between my thumb and index fingers', he replied." (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 277; Ibn Saad, I, 108, 125)

The Names of the Blessed Prophet

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has many sacred names. First and foremost are Muhammad and Ahmad, mentioned also in the Holy Quran. Muhammad means one who has been lavishly praised, while Ahmad denotes one who abundantly gives thanks.

The name Muhammad receives mention in the Quran four times, and Ahmad once. The Gospels refer to these names with the word Faraqlitos, which carries their exact meanings.

In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declares:

58. Halabî, I, 138.

"I am Muhammad and Ahmad.

I am the Effacer[59] through whose Prophethood Allah shall erase disbelief.

I am the Reviver, following whom mankind will be resurrected in the Hereafter.

I am the Last, the Seal of Prophets, after whom no Prophet shall come." (Bukhari, Manaqib, 17; Muslim, Fadail, 125)

The sacred names and attributes of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ have been given mention in many works. *Dalail'ul-Khayrat*, for instance, cites about two hundred of them. Some of these names and attributes which today beautifully adorn the Qiblah side wall of the *Rawdah* of the Prophet's Mosque in lines of exceptional calligraphy are:

Ahmad, Mahmûd, Muhammad, Hâmid, Hamîd, Bashîr, Nadhîr, Burhân, Amîn, Awwal, Âkhir, Duhâ, Habîbullâh, Hâdî, Khâtam, Mukhtâr, Mustafâ, Mutahhar, Mujtabâ, Nabî, Nûr, Raûf, Rahîm, Rasûlullâh, Rasûlü's-Thaqalayn, Rahmatan li'l-Âlamîn, Sayyidu'l-Mursalîn, Sayyidu'l-Kawnayn, Imâmu'l-Haramayn, Imâmu'l-Muttakin, Shafîu'l-Mudhnibîn, Shams, Tâ-hâ, Ummî, Yâ-sîn...

In the Foster Mother's Care

The Light of Being was born into the world fatherless, as lucidly expressed in the Quran:

اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَاٰوٰى

"Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?" (ad-Duha, 6)

For the first few days, the Blessed Child was suckled by his mother Aminah. Then Suwaybah briefly got to breastfeed the child, along with her own little one Masruh.[60]

A pillar of loyalty, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ always took care of the needs of her nursing mother Suwaybah throughout his life. Both he and Khadijah treated Suwaybah with kindness and honor during their Mecca years. Even after migrating to Medina, the Light of Being ensured her needs were taken care of by sending her provisions. After hearing the news of her demise during his return from the Khaybar expedition in the seventh year of Hegirah, the Messenger of Allah inquired the well-being of her son Masruh to send him support, only to find out not only about his

59. Mâhî (الماحي): One who erases or annihilates.

60. Suwaybah was also the foster mother of both Hamza and Abu Salama ﷺ, which therefore makes them the foster brothers of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. (Ibn Saad, I, 108-110)

death, but also the bereavement of all of Suwaybah's relatives well before her own. (Ibn Saad, I, 108, 109)

The respect and honor shown to Suwaybah by the Noble Prophet provides an exemplary instance of grateful loyalty.

It was Halimah who after Suwaybah received the honor of becoming the nursing mother of the Blessed Child.

The Arabs then had a custom of temporarily sending their newborns over to the care of desert tribes to be breastfed. Not only did the desert climate make children healthier and more courageous, the dialects of nomadic Arabs were also clearer and more eloquent, rendering children more articulate.

As part of the said custom, the Blessed Child was also handed over to the fortunate Halimah, from the tribe of Banu Saad, reputed as the most eloquent among all the tribes of Arabs. The most eloquent and expressive of all men, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thus prepared from a very early age for the duty of conveying the Words of the Divine, which themselves mark the peak of eloquence.

Attesting to this is the Prophet's response to Abu Bakr ؓ, when the latter once remarked he had never seen a more eloquent speaker than him.

"Little wonder! I am a man from Quraysh who was once suckled by a nursing mother of Banu Saad." (Ali al-Muttaqi, VI, 174/15247)

Halimah bint Haritha recounts how she ended up becoming the wet-nurse of the Blessed Child.

"It was a year devastated by famine. Astride a white donkey and accompanied by some fellow women from the Banu Saad, we headed towards Mecca in hope of finding infants to breastfeed. We had nothing left to eat. We had but an old she-camel, without even a drop of milk left to give. We also had a small child. As neither I, nor the camel could provide enough milk to feed her, we could not sleep due to the sound of her constant crying. We eventually arrived at Mecca. There was not a woman left who was not offered the little Muhammad. They all refused to take him, however; as they were all looking for a child whose father was still alive. But he was an orphan. Then every woman, except for me, ended up finding a child to take and returned. I did not wish to return empty handed, so I said to my husband:

'I will go and agree to take that orphan.'

So I did as I said, and returned to the tent with the child in my arms.

'You have made a good call,' said my husband. 'Who knows, the Almighty might provide us with blessings for his sake.'

And by all means, from the moment I had him in my arms I began overflowing with milk, and was able to abundantly feed both him and my own child. Come night, my husband went to check on our old camel, and found to our astonishment that she too had begun brimming over with milk. We milked her and drank to our hearts content, removing all trace of thirst and hunger. The children slept peacefully.

'By God, it seems you have gotten your hands on a truly blessed child', my husband could not help but say.

But our fortunes did not end there. Our donkey, always known to lag behind from the rest when traveling in a group, began overtaking the rest. I could hardly contain her.

'Isn't that the donkey you rode to Mecca?' people were asking, astonished.

'Yes', I would reply.

Back home, and as arid an area as it was, our sheep began returning at night full of milk from where they were grazing. The other sheep meanwhile were returning tired and worn out, full of thirst and hunger. We were able to milk our sheep in full at a time when the other sheep could not offer as little as a drop. The owners of the sheep were blaming the shepherds:

'Shame on you! Don't you graze our sheep where Halimah's shepherd grazes hers?' they were protesting.

They indeed had a point, for the shepherds grazed all the sheep in the same area. Ours returned with milk, yet theirs were bone dry.

What usually takes other children a month, little Muhammad ﷺ was developing in a day, and in a month, he had blossomed like a year old child. When he reached a year of age, he had grown to be a striking young toddler.

After staying with us for a few years, we finally returned him to his mother. But my husband could not bear his loss:

'Let us take him for a bit more, at least until the plague passes away from Mecca', he insisted. We could little stand to be deprived from his blessings through separation. We persevered so much that Aminah finally had to give in, allowing his blessings to remain with us for a little while longer." (Haythami, VIII, 221; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 278-279)

One day with his foster sister Shayma, the Blessed Child went next to the lambs, under the scorching midday heat. When they returned, Halimah rebuked her daughter for venturing outside under such heat, only to have the little Shayma respond:

"We never felt the heat of the sun even for a single moment. There was always a cloud hovering above my brother, shading us." (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 279; Ibn Saad, I, 112)

Halimah continues explaining:

"So he stayed with us for a while more. But having witnessed so many extraordinary things about him, a sudden fear that something might happen to him gripped us. We therefore headed for Mecca, to return him. We were at the upper part of Mecca, however, when we suddenly lost him." (Ibn Hisham, I, 179; Ibn Saad, I, 112)

It is reported that the Meccans then frenetically began looking for the lost child, but to no avail. Abdulmuttalib was near the Kaabah, praying for his wellbeing, which is when a voice was heard from above:

'Do not fear; for Muhammad has a Lord who shall not leave him unprotected!'

Abdulmuttalib called out in desperation:

'Whoever you may be…Tell us where the child is!'

'Near the tree towards the right side of the Tihama Valley,' it said.

Without further ado, Abdulmuttalib made way towards the described tree and found his grandson nearby. (Diyarbakri, I, 228)

It has also been reported that the verse in Chapter ad-Duha:

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدٰى

"And He found you wandering, and He gave you guidance", (Duha, 7) is a direct reference to the above incident.[61]

Halimah continues narrating the unfolding of events:

"Aminah was visibly surprised when we arrived next to her.

'Why have you brought him back when you insisted so much to take him in the first place?' she asked.

'The Almighty is our witness how well we have taken care of him,' I replied. 'But we had reason to fear something might happen to him, so we thought we would bring him back.'

'Please tell me what you saw that made you fear,' she asked.

61. Zamakhsharî, VI, 240.

Though we did not want to say at first, she insisted so much that we finally had to yield. But she was not surprised a bit at what we explained.

'My son has displayed many extraordinary things enough to leave one in awe. Now let me explain to you what I had witnessed before', she said, before proceeding to explain the astonishing experiences that took place during his delivery.

'You can now leave him with me and return home in peace,' was the last thing we heard her say." (Haythami, VIII, Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 278-279)

Halimah furthermore recounts:

"Abdulmuttalib sent us off with generous gifts. I returned home with an inexpressible amount of valuable goods. I also told him what I had already told the child's mother. Abdulmuttalib embraced the child, as he began weeping.

'There is no doubt, Halimah, that my son will have a great name. How I wish to see the days when he does,' he said." (Bayhaqi, Dalail, I, 145)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ displayed utmost loyalty to his foster relatives throughout his life. He would always address Halimah as 'dear mother' and show an enormous degree of affection and respect for her, even laying out his mantle for her to sit on. Whatever need she had, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would take care of. (Ibn Saad, I, 113, 114)

Halimah had one day come to Mecca to see the Prophet ﷺ. At the time he was married to Khadijah. They kept Halimah as their guest for some time, hosting her nicely. She bemoaned the famine and drought wreaking devastation in her land, laying waste to the livestock. Khadijah then presented her forty sheep and a camel for her to ride home with and to carry her load.[62]

During the conquest of Mecca, Halimah's sister had come to visit the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who was stationed near Abtah at the time. She had brought with her in a leather pouch some cheese and butter as a gift. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ straight away asked her of his foster mother. Upon hearing she had passed away, his eyes welled with tears. Then he commanded she be given clothes, a camel and two hundred dirhams of silver. Before returning satisfied to her village, the woman is known to have remarked:

"You are loyal now, as you were loyal back then." (Waqidi, II, 869; Balazuri, I, 95)

The First *Sharh'us-Sadr*: The Cleaving of the Chest

In order to prepare the Prophet ﷺ for his future reception of Divine mysteries, the Almighty opened his chest and cleansed his heart on numerous occasions, filling

62. Ibn Saad, I, 114.

it with unique traits like serenity, compassion, mercy, faith and wisdom. The first of these occurred while the Blessed Child was still with his foster mother, recounted later on by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself.

Years later, a man asked the Prophet ﷺ what the first signs of his prophethood was. The Prophet ﷺresponded in detail:

"My foster mother was from the clan of Banu Saad. One day my foster sister and I had set out with our livestock. We had not taken anything with us to eat. So I advised my sister to go to our mother and bring back some food.

So she left. I was left alone with the animals. It was not long after when two angels appeared, dressed in white.

'Is that him?' one said to the other.

'Yes', the other replied.

Then they quickly came next to me. Laying me on my back, they cleaved my chest. They then took out my heart, removing from it a black spot.

'Go and bring me some snow water', I heard one say to the other.

The water was brought and with it they washed my inside.

'Now get me some hail water', one again told the other. With that they washed my heart.

'Now bring me peace and serenity', one commanded yet again. They poured both into my heart.

'Now close it up and stamp it with the Seal of Prophethood', one said.

They closed up and sealed my heart and thereafter my chest. Then they immediately stitched made chest. I was really frightened. Quickly rushing home, I informed my foster mother of the incident…" (Ahmad, IV, 184-185; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 280; Haythami, VIII, 222)

Many sources testify to the occurrence of the above incident when the Light of Being was still four years of age.[63]

Anas ﷺ confirms having repeatedly seen the scar the Prophet ﷺ carried on his chest from that opening. (Muslim, Iman, 261)

Some of the underlying wisdoms behind the cleaving of the chest of the Noble Prophet ﷺ could be given as follows:

Through the incident, Allah ﷻ, informed people of His Prophet's reputation and prepared him for Revelation from a very early age. That the *Sharh'us-Sadr*, an

63. See Ibn Saad, I, 112.

act of spiritual purification, left in its trail marks and signs for all to witness, was to ease the path for others in affirming faith in his Prophethood. Extraordinary events like these in fact did make it easier for people to believe him.

The Journey to Medina and the Passing Away of Aminah

While the Light of Being was still six years of age, accompanied by Umm Ayman, Aminah took him to Medina to visit his father's grave. They stayed for a month in Medina next to Aminah's brothers. The visit proved fruitful as the Blessed Child ﷺ was able to mix with his cousins, even learning how to swim.[64]

Recalling those days, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remembers certain Jews coming next to him and staring lengthily at him, (Ibn Saad, I, 116) recounting:

"Again after inspecting me for a while, a Jew left the scene, only to come back a few moments later.

'What's your name, child?' he asked.

'Ahmad', I said.

Then, he looked at my back and murmured, 'He has got to be *him*.'

I told the incident to my uncles, who then informed my mother. She began to feel uneasy, so without further ado we prepared to return to Mecca." (Abu Nuaym, Dalail, I, 163-164)

But Aminah fell ill on the return journey and at thirty years of age breathed her last near Abwa', where she was buried. Moments before her death she gazed at her little orphan with loving eyes, filled with tender affection, hugged him and said the following:

"May Allah bless you! If what I have seen in my dreams is true, you shall be assigned by the Glorious and the Generous Allah to inform mankind of the good and bad. Allah will protect you from idols and idolatry. All that is alive will die, all that is new is bound to become old and all that is old is destined to perish. I will too now move on but knowing I will be forever remembered because I leave behind a pure child and a loving memory…" (Diyarbakri, I, 229-230; Kamil Miras, Tecrid Tercümesi, IV, 549)

Poet Arif Nihat Asya addresses Aminah as:

The woman, who at Abwa' lies,
From whose garden,
The most beautiful rose thrived.

64. See Ibn Saad, I, 116.

Bereaved now of his mother as well, the Light of Being returned to Mecca with his caretaker Umm Ayman.

Umm Ayman, the Blessed Child's caretaker, was another who the Prophet ﷺ would address as 'mother' and frequently visit. In expression of his loving respect, the Noble Prophet ﷺ is known to have referred to her as 'a second mother', and a member of his immediate family.[65]

Under the Protection of Abdulmuttalib

The Blessed Child was not left unprotected by Allah ﷻ, despite having lost his father and his mother within a few years in succession. Thereupon, he was taken under the caring wings of his loving grandfather Abdulmuttalib, who showed his beloved grandson a mercy and love that he had not shown even his own children.

Not a single person was allowed to enter Abdulmuttalib's room when he was alone or asleep except for Muhammad ﷺ who enjoyed the unreserved freedom of seeing his grandfather at will.[66] Similarly, out of respect, none of his own sons could dare to take Abdulmuttalib's seat near the Kaabah except for Muhammad ﷺ. The Beloved Child would be warned by his uncles not to sit in his grandfather's seat, only to have his imposing grandfather interject on his behalf:

"Let him sit in my place. I swear by God he is destined for greater things."

Abdulmuttalib would always have his dear grandson sit by his side, enjoying and approving of whatever the Child ﷺ would do.[67] He would never start a meal without his grandson and would send for him when he was not around.[68] When the food was served, he would always make sure to give him the ,ost delicious part.[69]

Mecca was once struck by a severe drought, leaving the locals in distress. Helpless, the Meccans climbed Abu Qubays Mountain to supplicate the Almighty for rain. Climbing with them was also Abdulmuttalib, carrying Muhammad ﷺ on his shoulders. Once they reached the top, people lined up near Abdulmuttalib who then began supplicating the Almighty for rain, lifting his hands aloft to the skies in desperate hope of a downpour, with the Blessed Child atop his shoulders. It did not take long for heaven's gates to open. The clouds bursted immediately after they began descending the mountain and generously inundated the parched Meccan soil.[70]

65. See Ibn Asîr, *Usdu'l-Ghâba,* VII, 303-304; Ibn Saad, VIII, 223.
66. Ibn Saad, I, 118.
67. Ibn Hishâm, I, 180.
68. Ibn Saad, I, 118.
69. Balazurî, I, 81.
70. See Ibn Saad, I, 90; Ibn Asîr, *Usdu'l-Ghaba*, VII, 112; Diyarbakrî, I, 239.

These delightful days went by in a flash, and when the Prophet ﷺ reached the age of eight, his grandfather Abdulmuttalib passed away. All his worldly supports, it seemed, had ended. His only protector, friend and trainer thereafter was to be his Lord Allah ﷻ.

There is immense wisdom underlying the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was left without parents and a grandfather at an early age. By these losses, the disbelievers were to be left without excuse to deny his prophethood in the future. They could no longer claim that he may have been trained by his parents or grandfather, in alleging to receive Revelation. Being an orphan, furthermore, meant protection from the corrupt customs of his society, sustained more often than not by passing on from father to son; it means he was to educated and trained thereafter exclusively by the Almighty. Confirming this is the following hadith:

"My Lord trained me, and perfectly has He trained me indeed." (Suyûtî, I, 12)

That he developed to attain the highest level of morality in spite of growing up without the privilege of receiving parental support and training is another enormously significant proof of the veracity of the prophethood of the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

Growing up as an orphan helped the Messenger of Allah ﷺ develop a merciful, refined heart, whereby he learned what it was to fully trust in the Almighty. Enduring a variety of difficulties that come with being an orphan and a lack of family support enabled the Prophet ﷺ to become the protector of orphans and other vulnerable alike from all levels of society. And so he has declared:

"Whoever protects an orphan from among his relatives or another, will be next to me in Paradise as close as the index finger is to the middle finger." (Muslim, Zuhd, 42; Bukhari, Adab, 24; Talâq, 14)

Another subtle reason behind the raising of the Blessed Child ﷺ as an orphan is that for mankind to find examples of all kinds of social status in his life, the Almighty put his Prophet ﷺ through all kinds of situations, from the most feeble position of an orphan to the highest as the head of state.

Under the Protection of Abu Talib

Right before his death Abdulmuttalib gathered all his sons around him to declare his will, advising them above all to look after his beloved grandson in the best possible manner after he passed away. Being siblings born from the same mother as Muhammad's ﷺ father Abdullah, the prime candidates to take care of the child were naturally Zubayr and Abu Talib. Lots were drawn and Abu Talib was eventually chosen to take care of the child.

Abu Talib was the most merciful of all of Abdulmuttalib's remaining sons.[71] He had a large family and, bar a few camels, sparse worldly possession. Like his father he was nonetheless was much respected, and was considered the master of Quraysh especially after the passing away of Abdulmuttalib. There was not be a single person who did not listen when he spoke and his words were considered authoritative among the locals. A man of towering virtue, he followed his father's footsteps in avoiding alcoholic beverages throughout his life.[72]

The love and care Abu Talib showed his beloved nephew was like that of a father for his son. Abu Talib's devotion to Muhammad ﷺ was in many respects indeed greater than what he showed his own children. There would not be so much a morsel taken from the table without the young Muhammad ﷺ first being ensured his share. It did not take long for Abu Talib to notice the plentitude of food on the table and how everybody was able to have their fill when Muhammad was eating with them, and contrarily the insufficiency of the food that would leave them hungry and asking for more whenever the Blessed Child was absent. There would invariably be food left over whenever they ate with Muhammad ﷺ. If there was some milk that would satisfy only one person, for instance, it only took the orphan to begin drinking it first for others after him to drink to their hearts content. Before meals, Abu Tâlib would therefore always command his children:

"Wait until my son comes."[73]

Fatimah, Abu Talib's wife, was an extremely virtuous woman with a gentle heart, who approached the young orphan with utmost affection. She was among those who years later migrated to Medina with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. The Noble Messenger ﷺ would always make sure to often visit her throughout his life, even taking his afternoon naps at times at her house.[74] Her passing away caused the Messenger of Allah to shed pearl-like tears from his eyes, a day which he labeled as the day in which 'his mother had died.' Under her shroud, the Prophet ﷺ instructed that she be dressed in his shirt, and before leading her *janazah* salat, he lied down awhile in her grave, supplicating. In response to those wondering the reason to all this, he replied:

"After Abu Talib, no other person helped me like her. I gave her my shirt so that the Mighty Allah would give her the dress of Paradise in the Hereafter."

Some Companions were astonished at the degree of the Blessed Prophet's sorrow. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then explained:

71. Ibn Asîr, *Usdu'l-Ghaba,* I, 22.
72. Halabî, I, 184.
73. Ibn Saad, I, 119-120, 168.
74. Ibn Saad, VIII, 222.

"She was a second mother to me. I would be the first one she fed when even her own children were hungry and sour-faced. She would comb my hair and scent me; she was indeed a mother." The Noble Prophet ﷺ then said the following prayer:

"May Allah forgive you, my mother, and reward you with the best. May Allah have mercy upon you! You were a mother to me after my own. You fed me while you were hungry. You clothed me when you needed clothes yourself. You fed me the tastiest foods, while depriving yourself. And you did all this only to gain the pleasure of the Almighty and in expectation of the abode of Hereafter!.." (Hâkim, III, 116-117; Haythamî, IX, 256-257; Ya'kûbî, II, 14)

The Second Cleaving of the Chest

Abu Hurayrah[75] ﷺ was known for his boldness in asking the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about things others would not dare. One day he inquired:

"What was the first sign you saw, Messenger of Allah, concerning your Prophethood?"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the guide to happiness in both worlds, answered to soothe the Companion's curiosity:

"Since you ask, Abu Hurayrah, I shall explain. I was once out in the desert; I must have been about ten. I was suddenly alarmed by a voice coming from above my head.

'Is that him?' one man was asking another.

'Yes…That sure is him,' the other answered.

They then appeared right in front of me. Their faces resembled nobody I had ever seen before; so were their clothes. Approaching me, each of them then held me by the arm, but I could not feel their touch.

'Lay him on the ground', one of them said to the other.

75. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, named Abd'us-Shams at birth, took the name Abdurrahman after entering Islam. While carrying a cat inside his shirt one day, he met the Blessed Prophet ﷺ who inquired what he was carrying. "A cat", he replied, upon which the Messenger of Allah jokingly called him Abu Hurayrah, which means the Father of a Kitten. The moniker stuck to the point that his real name was no longer used. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ arrived at Medina in the 7th year of Hegira. He was among the underprivileged Muslims of the Suffa, who called the Masjid'un-Nabawi home. Staying by the Prophet's ﷺ side day and night, he had an insatiable passion for learning the hadith directly from the mouth of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Thus, including repeats of what he heard from the prominent Companions, by the time he passed away he had narrated a total of 5374 hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ, more than any other Companion. He was 78 when he passed away in Medina in the 58th year of Hegira.

Together they laid me down. I did not feel any force, nor was there uneasiness of any kind.

'Come on…open his chest,' one said. But again, neither could I see, nor feel any pain.

'Remove malice and jealousy from there', he said.

He then removed something like a blood clot, throwing it away.

'Now insert mercy and compassion', one said. I saw them place something like silver, the same size of that which they had removed. Then one of them held my big toe, jiggled it a little and said:

'You can now leave in peace!'

As I got up to leave, I could feel mercy and compassion deep inside. Thereafter I could only feel respect for my elders and love for my juniors." (Ahmad, V, 139; Haythami, VII, 223)

THE YEARS OF YOUTH

A Development under Divine Protection

The young Muhammad ﷺ was protected by the Almighty from the evil habits of his society and times. He spent his youth immersed in moral purity in a way deserving of carrying the duty of prophethood, which a bright future stored for him. The man with the noblest lineage had undoubtedly also embodied the highest moral values among his people well before beginning his mission as a Prophet. His superlative generosity extended above all to his neighbors and he showed others a magnanimity and forgiveness that prevented him from harming anyone in any way whatsoever. Quarrelling and fighting, for him, were things absolutely unheard of. Combined with all these traits also was an unprecedented dependability, leading his peers to nickname him *al-Amîn*, the trustworthy, and *al-Sâdiq*, the honest.[76]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was once asked whether he had ever worshipped the idols or drank wine before Prophethood. Replying to both questions in the negative, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then went on to affirm:

"Even though I did not know about the Book and Faith, I somehow knew the Meccans were indulging in disobedience to Allah." (Diyarbakrî, I, 254-255)

The Prophet ﷺ recounts another time during his childhood when he experienced the protection of the Almighty:

"Still a young boy, I was playing with the boys of Quraysh, carrying stones from one place to another. To carry the stones with more ease, the other boys took off their garments and placed them over their shoulders, on top of which they began placing the the stones. Just as I was intending to do the same, I felt a very hard punch by someone I could not see.

'Leave your garment on', was all I heard him say.

So I left my garment on and continued to carry stones dressed, the only one among my friends who still had his clothes on." (Ibn Hishâm, I, 197)

Another similar incident predating the onset of Prophethood occurred during the rebuilding of the Kaabah, when the young Muhammad ﷺ was carrying stones on his shoulders with his uncle Abbâs, who advised his nephew to put his garment over his shoulders so as not to hurt himself. But when he tried to comply, the young

76. Ibn Hishâm, I, 191; Ibn Saad, I, 121.

Muhammad ﷺ collapsed on the ground, and with eyes fixed on the skies, all he could do was to ask his uncle for his garments back so he could cover his body. (Bukhari, Hajj, 42)

Although strolling naked in certain circumstances was deemed acceptable at the time, the Prophet ﷺ never walked in such a manner utterly unacceptable by Islam.

One can also remember the conversation between the Prophet ﷺ, still twelve year old child at the time, with Bahira, for an ample idea of his attitude to Meccan wrongdoings. When Bahira asked the child to speak the truth in the name of the idols Lât and Uzza, the response he got was:

"By Allah, I never hated anything more than Lât and Uzzâ; so do not ask me anything in their name." (Ibn Ishâq, p. 54; Ibn Saad, I, 154; see also Ahmed, V, 362)

Umm Ayman, the caretaker of the Blessed Child, reports that Quraysh used to pay homage to an idol called Buwaabah, where they would organize a special festival in its honor on a particular day each year, consisting of remaining next to the idol all day long and shaving their heads in reverence. Like other Meccans, Abu Talib had also prepared eagerly for this annual festival and asked his orphan nephew to attend with him. Much to the fury of his uncle and aunts, however, Muhammad ﷺ declined the offer.

"We are afraid a calamity will befall you for your lack of respect for our idols", his aunts were saying, pleading the child to be present at the festival. The Child ultimately accepted his aunts' pleas and made his way to the festival with his people. But once they arrived at the presence of the idol, Muhammad ﷺ all of a sudden disappeared, returning moments later petrified, with a pale face.

Asked by his anxious aunts as to what had happened, he said:

"I fear I may be possessed by an evil spirit!"

"The Almighty would never leave you to suffer such torment, for you are a child exuding all kinds of virtue", his aunts assured him. "Just tell us what you saw."

"Each time I drew near the idol, a tall man white man appeared telling me to get back and refrain from touching it", he said.

This would prove to be the last time Muhammad ﷺ was forced to attend idolater festivities.[77]

The subsequent account given by the Blessed Prophet is quoted by his cousin, Ali ibn Abu Talib ﷺ:

77. Ibn Saad, I, 158.

"Never did I think of taking any part in the festivities organized during the period of Ignorance, except on two occasions. But on both occasions, I was protected by Allah from these evils. While shepherding on one evening, I remember asking one of my fellow shepherds:

'Could you please look after my sheep so I have a chance to go down to Mecca and attend in that revelry like the other boys?'

'Sure', he said. 'Do whatever you want.'

So I went to Mecca. The moment I entered, I could hear music and singing coming from the first house. Inquiring what the occasion was, I was told that so and so were getting married. I decided to sit down and watch. But taking hold of me almost immediately was an immense drowsiness that put me to deep sleep. I was only awoken next morning by the heat of the sun. I quickly went back to my friend. When he saw me, he instantly asked me to tell him what I did.

"I did nothing", I replied.

The same thing happened to me again at another night, when I went to Mecca to participate in an event, only to be overcome with fatigue. I never again thought or did anything of this sort, until the day Allah honored me with Prophethood." (Ibn Ishâq, p. 58-59; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah*, II, 292)

Muhammad ﷺ as a Shepherd

The Light of Being worked as a shepherd before joining his uncle Abu Talib in trade. Shepherding was a profession that was held in high esteem by the Arabs; it was not uncommon to see even the children of the rich grazing sheep. Imparting unto them the precious skills of ruling and administering, shepherding, as confirmed by the following hadith, has moreover been the profession of all prophets well before their responsibilities of prophethood:

"All Messengers sent by Allah have been shepherds of sheep."

It is reported that some Companions then asked the Blessed Messenger ﷺ whether or not he had also been occupied in that line of work, to which he plied the reply:

"Yes, indeed. I used to tend the sheep of the Meccans in return for a pay[78]." (Bukhari, Ijârah, 2, Anbiyâ, 29; Ibn Majah, Tijârat, 5)

78. Reports vary on what the term *qararit*, used in the hadith to denote the payment received, could mean. One report suggests that it was rather the name of a place in Mecca, while the other implies it being the plural of the term *qirat*, a type of currency, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to shepherd the sheep of the Meccans in return for one *qirat*, or the twentieth of a dinar, per sheep, per day.

Another similar hadith states:

"Musa was sent as a Prophet while tending sheep. Dawud was made a Prophet while he was tending sheep. I also used to tend my family's sheep at Ajyad when I was granted with prophethood." (Ibn-i Saad, I, 126)

The young Muhammad ﷺ is reported to have been twenty-five years of age when he worked as a shepherded the sheep owned by Meccans.

Shepherding in times of affliction has been emphatically praised in the following hadith, which describes it as a virtuous occupation:

"A person in one of the most propitious lines of work is he who grazes his sheep on a hilltop or in a valley; who furthermore performs his salat, gives his alms, worships his Lord until the day he dies and constantly does good to others." (Muslim, Imarat, 125; Ibn Majah, Fitan, 13)

The path of solemnity and compassion and the capacity for reflection are paved for shepherds, as indicated by the hadith below:

"Serenity and solemnity follow shepherds." (Bukhari, Manaqib, 1; Muslim, Iman, 84/52)

Looking after sheep and shielding them from wild animals nurture in the shepherd emotions of mercy and protectiveness, favorable towards the flourishing of virtues a prophet must possess, like patience when facing the possible disrespect and ignorance of his people, and compassion to all the creations of Allah ﷻ.

Trade Journeys with His Uncles

The young Muhammad's ﷺ first trip to Syria was with his uncle Abu Talib while still only twelve years of age. He made another trip to Yemen when he was sixteen. On the first occasion, Abu Talib had decided to join the Meccan caravan en route to Syria. With all his family present to see him off, it was only at that moment that Abu Talib asked his beloved nephew:

"Would you like to come to Syria with me?"

The Blessed Child's aunts and other uncles were lukewarm to the idea, however, afraid that being very young, he might catch a disease on the way. Abu Talib was hence dissuaded and decided not to go ahead with the idea of taking Muhammad ﷺ along. But this was to the disappointment of his beloved nephew, who was left in tears.

"Why are you crying, my dear?" asked Abu Talib. "Is it because I am leaving you behind?"

Holding fast to the reins of the camel on which his uncle was astride, he pleaded:

"Who are you leaving me with? I have neither a father nor a mother!"

Suddenly overflowing with mercy, Abu Talib then replied:

"By Allah, I will take you with me…and this will be the last time I will ever think of separating from you." (Ibn-i Ishâk, s. 53; Abû Nuaym, *Dalâil,* I, 168)

His second trip was this time with his uncle Zubayr to Yemen when he was sixteen. Wanting to benefit from the blessings of his nephew in his business venture, Zubayr gained the permission of Abu Talib to take Muhammad ﷺ with him.[79]

On the way, they encountered a wild camel blocking a certain passage they needed to pass. The caravan decided to change their route but Muhammad ﷺ told the members of the caravan to let him take care of the situation instead.

The moment the wild camel saw the young Muhammad ﷺ, it calmed down. The Prophet mounted upon the camel, riding it until they passed the valley, after which he let the camel free.

Similarly, on their return, the caravan came across an unexpectedly flooded valley. The Prophet-to-be ﷺ kept his calm and told the others to follow him, leading the caravan through the valley, safe and sound, as if the Almighty had dried up their path for them. (Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah*, II, 282)

Encounter the Christian Monk Bahirah

During his trip to Syria with his uncle Abu Talib, the caravan camped near the monastery of Bahirah, a Christian monk. Astounded at having noticed a cloud hovering around the caravan and shading a certain person, as well as the branches of trees leaning forth to shelter someone from the sun near where the caravan had camped, the curious Bahirah decided to look in to the intriguing matter and invite the Meccans inside the monastery for some food:

"I have prepared food for you all. I insist each and every member of the caravan to join, young and old, free and slave."

The Meccans were taken aback by the invitation of Bahirah, since he had never seemed to take much interest in them before, during their numerous other trips to Syria. Nevertheless, everyone heeded the invitation. Inquisitively staring at all the faces of his guests upon their entrance, Bahirah felt he did not find whay he had been looking for, a certain sign he wished to see.

79. Diyarbakrî, I, 260.

"Did you leave someone behind?" he asked.

"No one", they said, "except for a child left to keep an eye on the caravan and their belongings, chosen for the job since he was the youngest."

But Bahirah insisted he come for the meal as well. Once brought by the table, Bahirah recognized Muhammad ﷺ immediately. Taking him by the hand, he murmured:

"This is the Master of the Both Worlds…The Almighty's Messenger, the Mercy of the Worlds!"

The Meccan elders asked him where he had gotten such an idea, to which Bahirah answered:

"I read his signs from our Holy Scriptures. As you approached, I noticed all trees and rocks bowing to him in respect. I am aware that it is only to prophets that these inanimate things bow in respect. I then became all the more convinced, once I looked further and noticed the his seal of prophethood between his shoulder blades."

Bahîrah then continued to pose more questions to Abu Talib about his young nephew and each answer he received set his heart at greater ease regarding his premonition. Bahirah was now certain about the child's prophethood.

"Take your nephew back to your homeland!" he then urged Abu Talib. "Beware of the harm that may come from the Jews, for God forbid if they recognize your nephew, they will most certainly try to kill him. The Jews desire the next prophet to be raised from among them, from the children of Israel, yet this child is an Arab. Take him back…Awaiting him is a great future."

Abu Talib listened to the advice of Bahirah and immediately turned back to Mecca, at the expense of cutting his business venture short. (Ibn Ishâq, p. 54-55; Ibn Saad, I, 153-155; Tirmidhî, Manâqıb, 3)

Some orientalists have exploited this incident in alleging that the Prophet ﷺ received all the vital information from Bahirah to establish his own religion; an unfounded accusation indeed. Bahirah, after all, was a Christian monk and the beliefs communicated in the textually corrupted Bible are contrary to the core of Islamic beliefs. So how could it be conceived that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ could imitate the ideas of Christians, or for that matter Jews, which he had set out to correct in the first place?

The God of Christianity, the faith professed by Bahirah, is attributed with anthropomorphic qualities, which results in in a materialistic idea of the Divine. The concept of God in Islam, on the other hand, the faith conveyed by the Final Messenger

ﷺ, is deeply entrenched in the notion of Divine unity and transcendence and thus stands entirely different. Allah ﷻ, is transcendent, beyond all comprehension and above all weaknesses and imperfections alike.

The Holy Quran therefore makes it clear, in no uncertain terms, that the People of the Book, the Torah and the Gospels, who lived before the appearance of the Final Prophet ﷺ, merit salvation only if they abided by the original form of their religions.

اِنَّ الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارٰى وَالصَّابِئِنَ مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ اَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." (al-Baqara, 62)

The Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ, being the Final Prophet, encompasses all times and places, and consequentially abrogates all previous religions and their validity. Not professing faith in Allah ﷻ, and His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is tantamount to disbelief. Even devout adherents from among the People of the Book today, are therefore excluded from the compass of people referred to in the above *ayah*.

Subsequent to professing faith comes the life of worship and the rules of conduct. Islam has implemented an organized life of worship, aligning social life with justice, morality and righteousness, in relation to which it decrees punishments for those who violate the law. The aspects of worship in the religion Bahirah practiced at the time, on the other hand, had already been falsified, already devoid of the laws that regulate social conduct.

Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was also unlettered. As clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran, neither did he know how to read nor write:

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهٗ بِيَمِينِكَ
اِذًا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ. بَلْ هُوَ اٰيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِى صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ
اُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيَاتِنَآ اِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ

"And you (O Muhammad) were not a reader of any scripture before it, nor did you write it with your right hand, for then might those have doubted, who follow

falsehood. But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge, and none deny Our revelations save wrong-doers." (al-Ankabut, 48-49)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was only twelve years old at the time he met Bahirah and the meeting was a very short one at that. It would be inconceivable to even momentarily entertain the idea that an unlettered boy of twelve could memorize six thousand odd verses of a Book in such a fleeting time and furthermore, keep each and every one of them in tact in his memory for twenty-eight long years, then all of a sudden come out and gradually begin to communicate them at the age of forty. Nobody in their right mind could dispute the fact that Islam, as a universally accepted religion, has brought a comprehensive way of life that simply cannot be conjured up out of the blue by even a scholar of expertise, let alone by a child.

What's more, had Bahirah really known all this as alleged, then why would he not proclaim the religion himself instead of leaving the honors to a boy whom he had never met before?

Another aspect that should also be noted is that the language spoken by Bahirah was not Arabic, in contrast to the characteristically clear and eloquent Arabic of the Holy Quran:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ اِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِسَانُ الَّذِى
يُلْحِدُونَ اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمِىٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِىٌّ مُبِينٌ

"We know indeed that they say, 'It is a man that teaches him.' The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this (Quran) is Arabic, pure and clear." (an-Nahl, 103)

The Quran, moreover, uses uses the Arabic language so powerfully that it mounts what is an insurmountable challenge against the entire Arab poets and their literary abilities. The Divine origin of the Quran and the sure failure awaiting those who attempt to imitate its powerful literary majesty is bluntly expressed in the verse:

قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يَاْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ
لَا يَاْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

"Say: Verily, though mankind and the jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another." (al-Isra, 88)

Considering that the Prophet's ﷺ meeting with Bahira was witnessed by many Meccans, had the orientalist claim any truth to it, the Meccans who severely rejected Islam would have surely used this as a pretext to reject the Religion. Although historical accounts abundantly attest to the fact that the idolaters did not forego the slightest opportunity that came up to attack Islam, there exists no reference to a polemic based on this meeting, which suggests that even they must have thought taking such a claim seriously as absurd.

The Hilf'ul-Fudûl Society

Clashes that repeatedly occurred between Arab tribes during the forbidden months were referred to in general as the Fijar Battles. There are four such battles known to have taken place during the Age of Ignorance, the last one being between the tribes of Quraysh and Kinanah, in which the future Prophet ﷺ, still twenty years of age at the time, also took part but without shedding any blood; he merely collected the stray arrows shot by the enemy and handed them to his uncles.[80]

The battle came to an end in the month of Zilqadah, one of the months deemed holy by Arabs. Not long after, a Yemenite tradesman from the tribe of Zubayd arrived in Mecca to sell his goods. The Meccan Âs ibn Wâil, one of the richest tradesmen of the town, purchased the goods brought by the man but did not pay the price he had promised. Helpless, the poor man asked the help of the strong clans Abd'ud-Dâr, Mahzûm, Jumâh, Sahm and Adiyy ibn Kâ'b tribes, but to no avail. They even scolded him for seeking his rights.

Unable to find help in resolving the problem, the embittered Yemenite trader climbed the hill of Abu Qubays near the Kaabah and recited a poem, which began with the words 'O Sons of Fihr', referring to the reputed forefather of the Meccans, explaining the injustice he had suffered at the hands of As ibn Wail, calling out for the help of Meccans who had gathered around the Kaabah at that time. The first man making a move to help was Zubayr, the Prophet's uncle, who organized a meeting at the house of Abdullah ibn Jud'an, attended by many notables of Mecca.

There, they made a solemn pledge to defend and restore the rights of anyone, beginning with the Yemenite, who suffers any injustice within the borders of Mecca, and to struggle against tyrants on behalf of the weak, "as long as mounts Hira and Sabir stood in their places and until there was enough water left in seas to moist a single strand of hair."

The newly founded society remained strong even after they successfully regained the rights of the Yemenite from Âs ibn Wâ'il and remained on its feet to

80. Ibn Hishâm, I, 198; Ibn Saad, I, 126-128.

help the victims of injustice thereafter, trying its utmost to restore justice among people.[81]

Being entrenched in justice and based on helping the weak, the Hilf'ul-Fudûl was the only society that the Prophet ﷺ supported during the Age of Ignorance, remembering the society with sympathy long after his Prophethood:

"I was present with my uncles at the house of Abdullah ibn Jud'ân when the Hilf'ul-Fudûl was established. So satisfied was I with it that being given red camels (the most prized Arab commodity at the time) in its place could not have satisfied me more. If I were invited to participate in such a society even today, I would certainly accept the offer without hesitation." (Ibn Kathîr, al-Bidâya, II, 295)

The Business Life of the Prophet ﷺ

It should always be borne in mind that being home to the Kaabah, the house of Allah ﷻ, Mecca has always been a revered visiting place for believers not only since the time of Ibrahim عليه السلام, but also since Adam عليه السلام. Trading with pilgrims by virtue of buying goods from neighboring lands and selling them at fairs during the seasons of pilgrimage, not to mention the selling of local goods to neighboring lands during the regular season, always provided Meccans a major source of livelihood.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had already traveled with his uncles in trade caravans to Syria and Yemen as a teenager. In later years, he traveled on another two occasions to Yemen, to the Juraish market, on behalf of Khadijah رضي الله عنها, receiving in return a young male camel for each trip.[82] On one occasion, he also took a caravan loaded with goods belonging to Khadijah رضي الله عنها to the Hubasha market at Tihamah. Accompanying him on this trip was Maysara, Khadijah's رضي الله عنها servant. They brought the valued Tihamah fabric they had purchased at the market back to Mecca and sold it to Hakim ibn Hizam with a high profit. The Noble Messenger ﷺ was always very happy with Khadijah's رضي الله عنها conduct when working for her, confessing to have never worked with a better business partner than Khadijah رضي الله عنها who more often than not would end up paying Muhammad ﷺ more for his services than the price agreed upon. (Halabî, I, 221, Aynî, X, 104)

It all began with Abu Talib's advice to Muhammad ﷺ:

"I am a poor man, my dear nephew. Drought has left us with nothing to trade. It has dried up all our capital. But I hear a caravan is about to leave to Damascus and Khadijah رضي الله عنها, the daughter of Khuwaylid, is looking for a trustworthy agent to sell some of her goods over there on her behalf; a dependable, loyal person like yourself. I think we should convince her to accept you as a partner in trade. I believe

81. Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâya,* II, 295-296; Ibn Saad, I, 128-129.
82. Hâkim, III, 200/4834.

she will prefer you for your trustworthiness. The truth is I do not want you to go to Damascus for the Jews have me fear for your wellbeing, yet I cannot think of another way out."

The offer made Khadijah ﵂ very happy, and she ended up offering Muhammad ﷺ more money than expected, remarking:

"I never knew Muhammad would be willing to work for me!"

Khadijah ﵂ knew very well that Muhammad ﷺ was a very reliable and honest man, who possessed an exceptional moral standard.[83]

As Muhammad ﷺ was preparing to leave for Syria, Khadijah ﵂ advised her servant Maysara to go with him and obey him under all circumstances.

Having loaded the two camels, they set out. At the outset, the two camels kept lagging behind the rest of the caravan, a reason for concern for Maysara as he felt anxious and rushed to Muhammad ﷺ to inform him of the problem. It only took Muhammad ﷺ to place his hands on the camels' hooves, immediately after which they rejuvenated, bellowing and marching in a frenzied pace to take the lead in front of the caravan. Witnessing such a sight, the other members of the caravan thereafter showed extra care for Muhammad ﷺ and his servant.[84]

The young Muhammad ﷺ was always honest in his business transactions, fulfilling the promises he made at any cost. Ibn Abbas ﵄, who thoroughly knew the details of Muhammad's ﷺ life, has said:

"Whenever the Messenger of Allah promised something he would definitely do it." (Bukhari, Shahâdât, 28)

A similar affirmation was made by Sâib ibn Abi's-Sâib ﵁, who recounts the time he visited the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as he was surrounded by the Companions.

"The Companions started praising me to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, thinking he knew little of me. But he then told the others he knew me more intimately than the rest, upon which I said:

"May my mother and father be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah; you surely do. You were my business partner; and what an excellent partner you were. Never do I remember you quarrelling nor disputing with me!" (Abû Dâwud, Adab, 17/4836; Ibn Majah, Ticârât, 63)

Countless examples from his life illustrate why the Blessed Prophet was nicknamed *al-Amîn* (the Trustworthy) and *as-Sâdiq* (the Honest). One such instant is narrated by Abdullâh ibn Abi'l-Hamsâ ﵁:

83. Ibn Hishâm, I, 203; Ibn Saad, I, 129; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâya*, II, 297.
84. Diyarbakrî, I, 262.

"I did some trade with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ long before his prophethood. Having owed him money, I told him to wait for me and that I would repay him after a short while. But not long after I departed, I forgot my promise, and came around to remembering it only after three days. On impulse, I rushed back to the spot where I had made the promise and I found him there still waiting for me. Expecting him to pour scold on me, that noble man, who evinced the most remarkable virtues, instead simply remarked, 'You have placed me in a very difficult situation, young man, keeping me waiting here for the past three days." (Abû Dâwûd, Adab, 82/4996)

Such splendid behavior evocative of great wisdom could have only been embodied by a future Prophet.

Had the Almighty wished, He could have enabled His Beloved Prophet to lead a comfortable life, beginning from childhood. But Divine Wisdom willed that he earn his livelihood with his own hands and thus set an example for others to emulate. Confirming the action of the Noble Prophet ﷺ are his words:

"None has ever eaten a better sustenance than that earned by his own hands..." (Bukhari, Buyû', 15; Enbiyâ, 37)

Any given cause will decrease in value in people's eyes, if its leader makes a living only through the donations of his followers. Such a leader will no longer be taken seriously by others. This is the gist that underlies the command of the Almighty to His prophets:

وَمَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ اِنْ اَجْرِىَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds." (al-Shuarâ, 109, 127, 145, 164, 180; Yûnus, 72; Hûd, 29)

Echoing this truth also is the following couplet:

Covet not the favor of another,
For its price is the gem of freedom

Since he supported himself through his own earnings, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was in this sense among the most independent of all people.

The Observations of Monk Nestor

After a long journey, the caravan eventually made a stopover at Busra, part of Syria. Muhammad ﷺ retreated under an olive tree in the vicinity of the monastery of Monk Nestor. Noticing the man taking a respite in the shade, and already having met Maysara before, the Monk asked him:

"Maysara! Who is the man under the shade?"

"He is from the tribe of Quraysh", Maysara answered.

"Has he any redness in his eyes?" the Monk then asked.

"Yes, he has."

"Then he has got to be the Last Prophet!" exclaimed Nestor. "If only I could live to see the beginning of his prophethood and help him!" (Ibn Saad, I, 130-156; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidâya*, II, 297-298)

Soon after, the caravan left Busra for Mecca. On the way back, Maysara witnessed two angels shading Muhammad ﷺ at times when the heat of the desert soared to unbearable heights. The journey proved to be a profitable one for the entire caravan.[85]

Marriage to Khadijah رضي الله عنها

Immediately following the return to Mecca, Maysara began conveying in great detail the supreme conduct he witnessed in the Blessed Man during the journey, as well as their spectacular experiences throughout. Upon hearing this, Khadijah رضي الله عنها began nurturing a wish to marry Muhammad ﷺ.

Nafîsa bint Umayya, a close friend of Khadijah رضي الله عنها, narrates how it all developed then on:

"Khadijah رضي الله عنها was a clever, hardworking lady of an splendid moral standard. Virtually, there was not a single man from her tribe who did not carry a strong desire to marry her. But Khadijah رضي الله عنها was a great admirer of Muhammad ﷺ. Following their return with the trade caravan from Damascus, Khadijah رضي الله عنها sent me to sound him out regarding his intentions of marriage.

'Why don't you marry, Muhammad?' I asked him.

'How can I when I am without material means?'

'Say you did have the means; would you then marry an honorable, beautiful and moreover wealthy woman?'

'Who is this lady?' he then asked.

'Khadijah رضي الله عنها, I replied.

'Do you think that is possible?'

'Leave that to me', I assured him. He then remarked:

85. Ibn Saad, I, 130, 156-157.

'If you can arrange it, I will marry her.'

Without delay, I went to Khadijah ﵂ to inform her of our conversation." (Ibn Saad, I, 131)

Upon hearing the good news of her confidant, Khadijah ﵂ proposed to Muhammad ﷺ. The Light of Being ﷺ then informed his uncle Abu Talib of the proposal, who in line with the custom of the time went to Khadijah's ﵂ uncle to ask her hand in marriage on behalf of his beloved nephew. Khadijah's ﵂ uncle gave his blessings and the marriage ceremony went ahead, attended by all relatives and friends. Short speeches were given by Abu Talib and Khadijah's ﵂ cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal. Once the talks came to an end, Khadijah's ﵂ uncle Amr stood and said:

"Bear witness, people of Quraysh, that I hereby declare Khadijah ﵂ ibn Khuwaylid as the wife of Muhammad ibn Abdullah."[86]

As *mahr*, the obligatory dowry offered to the bride in marriage, Muhammad ﷺ gave Khadijah ﵂ twenty young camels.[87] At the time of their marriage, Muhammad ﷺ was around twenty-five years old, while Khadijah ﵂, a widow already with children from her previous marriage, was around forty.

Throughout their marriage, Khadijah ﵂, the mother of the Believers, proved to be a brilliant support for Muhammad ﷺ, virtually laying her life and riches at his feet. Stemming from her noble character, she was known as *al-Afifah* (the Chaste), *al-Tâhirah*, (the Pure) and most notably, before and after the advent of Islam, as *Khadijat'ul-Kubra*,[88] Khadijah ﵂ the Great.

The following words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ attest to her outstanding status:

"The best woman of the Hereafter is Maryam bint Imrân, mother of Isa, while the best of this world is Khadijah ﵂ bint Khuwaylid." (Bukhari, Manâqıbu'l-Ansâr, 20; Muslim, Fadâil'us-Sahâbah, 69)

The future Prophet's choice of marriage shows he was never a man motivated by egoistic desires. He could have most certainly married a younger and more beautiful lady, if he wanted, and not a widow with children. But the Noble Muhammad ﷺ was not searching for passing beauties or youth in his wife to be, but rather treasured virtues like honor, chastity and morals.

86. Diyarbakrî, I, 264; Yakûbî, II, 20.
87. Ibn Hisham, I, 206; Ibn Asîr, *Usdu'l-Ghaba,* I, 23.
88. Ibn Saad, VIII, 14-15.

The Wisdom behind the Multiple Marriages of the Prophet ﷺ

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ contracted multiple marriages after he the age of fifty-five, a move behind which lay much wisdom. Regardless, since Allah had made the Messenger of Allah ﷺ an example for others to emulate in all aspects of life by Allah ﷻ, as testified by the following *ayah*, entertaining any bad thoughts about his marriages and taking these thoughts even further to the point of slander, only betrays an ignorance of facts and a malicious intention:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِى رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللّٰهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيرًا

"Verily in the Messenger of Allah there is a good example for him who lookes unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much**."** (al-Ahzâb, 33:21)

The Blessed Prophet is an exemplar beyond comparison in all affairs, especially family relations. Even though we cannot give details here on all the righteous wives of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his marriages, a task that surpasses the scope of this book, we will nevertheless touch upon some of their characteristics.

Undoubtedly it is during youth that one feels the strongest desires for the opposite gender. From this aspect, a look into the early life of the Prophet ﷺ evidently presents an impeccably chaste and honest young man. This can easily be gleaned from the nickname given to him by Meccans, *al-Amîn*, the Trustworthy, without requiring a look elsewhere. His integrity is also proved by the fact that no Meccans had ever made any allegations about his marital life. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ married only once during the Meccan period, when he was twenty-five, to Khadijah ؓ, a widow of forty. Throughout their twenty-five year marriage, which came to an end with the passing away of Khadijah ؓ, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ never married another lady. The Arab custom of the time was hospitable to polygamy; had the Prophet ﷺ gone ahead to marry another, it would have been deemed perfectly acceptable and he would have incurred no blame for doing so.

Following the passage of Mother Khadijah ؓ, the Blessed Prophet married Sawda ؓ, another widow. Having immigrated to Abyssinia with her former husband, she suffered his death on the return back to Mecca, leaving her vulnerable and without protection, especially against her relatives, who, predominantly being idolaters, were putting unbearable pressure on her to reject Islam. Hence in order to help and protect her, the Noble Messenger ﷺ married Sawda ؓ in the tenth year of Prophethood. Apart from his marriages to Khadijah and Sawdah, the rest of the marriages of the Prophet ﷺ were to take place in Medina.

The Hegira marked the beginning of an entirely new period in the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. No longer was he only a Prophet, but also a head of state and a commander of an army of Believers. Above all, he was a teacher entrusted with the responsibility of conveying the message in a way that would reach all kinds of people in different places, as befitted their peculiar needs. Setting a precedent for such needs was the primary motive behind the marriages of the Prophet ﷺ, interwoven with a remarkable wisdom from all perspectives, whether religious, social or moral.

Aisha ﵂ was the only maiden whom the Blessed Prophet ﷺ married. Despite her young age, she was very clever, graced with an acute intellect and a profound understanding. It was from her that the female Companions learned with ease the Islamic principles and regulations, especially those peculiar to women. Even five to six decades after the passing away of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, the remaining Companions and the rest of the Muslim community, including the children and the grandchildren of that first generation who never had the privilege of physically being in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ, were able to learn Islam directly from her. In hindsight, foreshadowing this was the confirming hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

"Learn one third of your religion from the house of Aisha ﵂." (Daylamî, II, 165/2828)

Aisha ﵂ is among the seven Companions known as the *mukthirun,* for having transmitted an enormous number of ahadith pertaining to the sayings and actions of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ; two- thousand-two-hundred-and-ten to be exact. One-hundred-and-ninety four among them are narrations agreed upon (*muttafaqun alayh*) by both Bukhari and Muslim, the two paramount scholars of hadith.

Aisha ﵂, the mother of Believers, was a lady steeped in knowledge, gifted with an insight into the Holy Quran with regard to obligations and prohibitions, not to mention her knowledge of medicine, poetry, Arab history and the lineage of Arab families. Whenever the Companions had difficulty in resolving their disagreement over a given issue, they would always come to Aisha ﵂ for a solution. This applied to even the more prominent Companions of the Prophet ﷺ,[89] as confirmed by Abu Musa ﵁:

"Whenever we came across a difficulty in understanding a saying of the Messenger of Allah, we would ask Aisha ﵂ for help, who would clear any possible misunderstanding." (Tirmidhî, Manâqıb, 62)

By marrying his daughter and establishing a familial relation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also reinforced his already strong friendship with Abu Bakr ﵁, the closest friend and the most loyal supporter of the Prophet ﷺ.

89. See Ibn Hajar, *al-Isâba,* IV, 360.

In his marriage to Hafsah ﵂, the Messenger of Allah had a similar idea in mind, to establish a familial relationship with the outstanding Omar ﵁. Hafsah ﵂ was bereaved of her husband who was martyred at the Battle of Badr. Omar ﵁ first wished for Abu Bakr ﵁ to take his daughter's hand in marriage, and then upon Abu Bakr turning down of the offer, Othman ﵁, who however also declined. Omar ﵁ was saddened by their refusal. Thus, by marrying Hafsah ﵂, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ effectively appeased Omar ﵁ and at the same time mended the damaged relationships between Abu Bakr, Othman and Omar ﵁.

The heavily debated marriage of the Prophet ﷺ to Zaynab ﵂ is in fact laden with profound wisdom. In the first place, as halfhearted as she was, by arranging the marriage between Zaynab ﵂, the daughter of his aunt, to Zayd ﵁ his emancipated slave, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ helped eradicate some mistaken notions prevalent among Arabs and through persons closest to him and set an example of putting an end to the discrimination between the rich and the poor, the noble and the slave, sending a message out that all were equal in the sight of Allah ﷻ, like the teeth of a comb. Yet, the reluctance of Zaynab as well as the persistent pressure of her relatives meant that the marriage became unbearable for both parties. Although Zayd ﵁ did consult the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and sought his permission to divorce Zaynab, he was instead advised to keep patient. Once the marriage reached an insufferable level however, Zayd had no other choice than to divorce.

Revealed a short time after the divorce, an *ayah* commanded the Prophet ﷺ to marry Zaynab,[90] whereby Allah ﷻ, willed the abolishment of the Arab notion of regarding marriage with the former wife of an adopted son as illicit. The marriage was thus aimed toward drawing attention, once and for all, to the difference between an adopted child and one's own, emphasizing the distinction between the two.

Thus the absurdity of the claim that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ married Zaynab for her beauty stems from a sheer ignorance of the following facts:

1. First of all, Zaynab ﵂ was the Prophet's ﷺ cousin, the daughter of his aunt. Thus he knew her from childhood and saw her on innumerable occasions.

2. Had the Blessed Prophet ﷺ proposed to her before, she would have accepted it wholeheartedly; neither was there any obstacle standing in the way of their marriage. But not only did the Noble Prophet ﷺ ask her to marry Zayd, he moreover turned down their request for divorce on numerous occasions.

In short, such incidents had to take place to facilitate the establishment of the many principles of Islamic Law through them being embodied in the life of the Blessed Messenger ﷺ and provide precedents for later practices.

90. See al-Ahzâb, 37.

The Prophet's ﷺ marriage to Safiyya ؓ, the daughter of the Jewish leader of Khaybar, was motivated by the intention of bolstering relations with the Jews, conducive therefore to a political aim.

The marriage to Juwayriyah ؓ also had similar aims. Marrying Juwayriyah, the daughter of a chieftain, meant the release of hundreds of prisoners of battle, who enthralled to regain their freedom, entered Islam in thjeir entirety. Their good fortune was occasioned by the marriage between the Prophet ﷺ and Juwayriyah ؓ.

The Noble Prophet's ﷺ marriage to Umm Habîbah ؓ was prompted by the intention of protecting her. Among the early Muslims who immigrated with her husband to Abyssinia, Umm Habîbah was left alone and unprotected there when her husband retracted from Islam. She nonetheless courageously preserved her faith under extremely difficult circumstances. Although her father Abu Sufyan was at the time the leader of the Meccans, Umm Habîbah's faith and honor prevented her from asking for his help. Hence, by marrying her, the Noble Prophet ﷺ took her under his protection. A further blessing fostered by the marriage was that it helped reduce the enmity between the Meccan idolaters and Muslims.

Now, had the Prophet ﷺ married out of sexual desires, there were many young and beautiful daughters of the Ansar, the Medinan Muslims, from whom he could have chosen. Doubtless they would all have been more than willing to marry the Prophet ﷺ and thus attain the honor of becoming the wife of the Last Messenger and consequently the *Mother of the Believers*. The Prophet, however, never chose to head down that path.

It therefore ought to be realized that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ contracted multiple marriages, with the permission and command of Allah ﷻ, for reasons social, moral and religious, and above all out of the need to have a number of women trained to convey the specific legal commandments of Islam to other Muslims. Considering Islam is a universal religion that aims to cover all times and places, it would be difficult to think that the duty of teaching the vast corpus of Islamic knowledge should rest upon one woman only; and had that been the case, the religion may not have properly passed on to future generations. Besides, that 'one' wife could well have passed away before the Prophet ﷺ, which would have forever interrupted the establishment of Islamic Law.

There are many private matters pertaining to Islamic Law that women would feel uncomfortable asking men. But given they have female instructors they could then learn such matters with ease, safe from any discomfort. Muslim societies therefore are always in need of educated and knowledgeable women to ensure the outright practice of Islam. Could there be, then, anyone better to fulfill this duty than the Blessed Wives, who breathed the same air as the Prophet ﷺ and learnt everything

directly from him? Beyond everything, the way they conducted themselves and the sheer life of piety they led, have rightly made them shining examples for the future generation of Believers.

If one wonders as to how exactly the Noble Prophet's ﷺ multiple marriages can constitute an example for people in this day and age, the following considerations should be borne in mind.

First of all, we need to remember that not all the practices of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are meant to be imitated. Being the first representative of a religion, its founder as well as its implementer, his position was unique. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was hence obliged to carry out some practices peculiar to himself only, like the *tahajjud* prayer, fasting continuously without break (*sawm-ul'wisâl*) and the prohibition of him and his family from receiving charity even if they should be in need. The multiple marriages he contracted owing to various underlying reasons, whether religious, social or political, do not constitute examples for the rest of the *Ummah* to emulate, as held by the consensus of Muslim scholars.

It ought to be remembered that it was not Islam that initiated polygamy. Islam rather reformed and regulated the already existent practice. Before Islam, there was no limitation as to the number of women a man could marry. Restricting this number to four, Islam at the same time emphatically recommends monogamy, if one is apprehensive of not being able to treat all spouses with justice.[91]

Secondly, contracting more than one marriage is not a commandment, but rather a permission given in special circumstances, motivated by the aim of upholding and safeguarding the marital institution.[92] In times of war and plague, for instance, the number of men can tend to decrease drastically, leaving many women without spouses. The practice can therefore serve to protect women left without protection. Moreover, if one is married to a woman depleted with ill health, a physical disorder or one who is unable to conceive, then the practice can provide opportunity for remarriage without the need for divorce, from whose damaging consequences the family is therefore protected. Regardless of the circumstance, the upper limit is four, whatever the motive behind it may be.

91. See an-Nisâ, 3.

92. Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır elucidates the issue in the following:
"…As for contracting multiple marriages: It cannot be disputed that, essentially, this is only a permission, rendering permissible (*mubah*) something that at the same time can become impermissible (*makruh*) if there is fear of committing injustice towards any of the spouses. Having said that, it would not be a farfetched construal of the *ayah*, to see that it suggests contracting multiple marriages can become recommendable (*mandub*) even necessary (*wajib*) in certain situations, characteristically defined by an increase of risk, for both men and women, of falling into iniquity." (*Hak Dîni Kur'ân Dili,* II, 1290)

Indeed, when war strikes it can takes its toll on the population, in which case encouraging the contracting of multiple marriages may provide the only remedy to boost the population and prevent prostitution. Numerous examples of such circumstances have come to pass through the history of mankind. In overcoming such major challenges, Islam always offers solutions through allowing leeways of such nature, all of which serve to make life easier and keep it steadfast on its natural course. This shows the vitality of Islam, since it exhibits an ability to solve all kinds of potential problems that may surface in different times and places, under various conditions.

The following *ayah* makes clear that one who does intend to contract more than one marriage should be aware of his responsibilities and seek to establish justice among his wives, lest the injustice he commits should lead to him incur the punishment of Allah ﷻ.

وَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِى الْيَتَامٰى فَانْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ
لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ مَثْنٰى وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا
فَوَاحِدَةً اَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰٓى اَلَّا تَعُولُوا

"And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice between them, then marry only one or what your right hands possess; this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the right course" (an-Nisâ, 4/3)

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوٓا اَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَآءِ وَلَوْ
حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ
وَاِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

"And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish it, but be not disinclined from one with total disinclination, so that you leave her as it were in suspense; and if you effect a reconciliation and guard against evil, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (an-Nisâ, 4/129)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ states, "A man married to two women without having established justice among them will be resurrected half paralyzed in the Hereafter." (Ibn Majah, Nikâh, 47)

Islam also allows women to lay down the condition, at the time of their marital contract, that her husband observe monogamy throughout the marriage. This is a legal right given to women permitting them to make a case against any second marriage provided they had stipulated it at the time of the contract.[93]

A crude logic may attempt to justify the multiple marriage of a woman, that is her having more than one husband. Such a notion is completely wrong, since a child born from such a marriage will not have a proper lineage, forever leading to controversy regarding who his/her father is. Not only does Islam reject this type of marriage by calling it *fujur* (open sin), but no other legal system, religious or secular, is found to be hospitable to that kind of practice. Islam places great emphasis on the progeny of human beings, to the point of demanding that a divorced woman wait a period of at least three months before marrying again, lest she may be pregnant from her previous marriage, in which case the waiting period will clear any confusion that might arise with regard to the child's father. The waiting period described is ignored today by almost all secular legal systems. The difference illustrates the level of care shown by Islam for human honor, through the laws it lays for ensuring its protection.

To contemplate all these unique conditions enables one to understand the underlying reasons behind the permission given by Islam for contracting multiple marriages, which stems from its consideration of various circumstances. Islam is not only the religion of the strong and healthy, but equally of the old and the weak. It offers rules regulating not only common conditions, but also those that provide solutions for the more difficult quandaries. Not only is it the religion of men, but also the religion protecting the rights of women; it is the inimitable religion that cares so much for the honor and dignity of human beings that it does not turn a blind eye on women and children falling into destitution owing to a reckless breakdown of the family.

The Emancipation of Zayd ibn Harithah ﷺ and His Adoption by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ

Abducted by the tribe of Banî Qayn, the young Zayd ibn Harithah was brought to the Ukaz Festival to be sold. Eventually buying him for four hundred dirhams was Hakim ibn Hizam, who then offered him to his aunt Khadijah ﷺ. Upon seeing the young boy for the first time, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said:

"Had I been the owner of this slave I would have certainly emancipated him!"

"In that case he is yours", said Khadijah ﷺ, hearing her husband's words.

93. Hayreddin Karaman, *Mukâyeseli İslâm Hukûku,* v. I, p. 290, İstanbul, 1996.

The mercy of all worlds, the Noble Messenger ﷺ then immediately set him free from slavery. (Ibn Hishâm, I, 266; Ibn Saad, III, 40)

Agonized by the abduction of his son, Zayd's father was in the meantime looking for him everywhere. After a long search, by some information passed on to him by the returning pilgrims, he found the traces of his son in Mecca, to where he immediately set out with his brother. Finding the Prophet ﷺ not long after, he informed the Prophet ﷺ of his intention to take his son back and of his willingness to pay the required ransom, appealing to him to be merciful and quoting a reasonable price. But the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had something else in mind.

"Can we not find another solution for this?" he asked them.

"What other solution is there?" they replied, thinking the only way for them to regain custody of Zayd would be through paying his ransom out of the slavery they supposed he was still in.

"Let's call Zayd here and leave him free to decide between me and you", said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. "If he chooses you, then you may take him without paying anything. But if he prefers me, you have to understand that by Allah, I can tell someone wanting to stay with me to leave!"

Both Zayd's father and uncle were elated with the suggestion of the Prophet ﷺ, commending him for his kindness and generosity, confident that Zayd would choose them, after which they could leave Mecca with him without having to pay any ransom. The idea that he might choose to stay never crossed their minds. But the words of Zayd proved them wrong:

"I swear by Allah, I will not prefer anyone over you! You are like a father and mother to me. My preference is to remain here with you."

When his father and uncle showed their disappointments over his choice, Zayd said:

"I have seen such extraordinary things from him that I could never possibly prefer anyone over him. I will never leave him."

Moved by Zayd's loyalty, the Prophet ﷺ took him by the hand to the Kaabah where he proclaimed:

"My fellow people! Bear witness that Zayd is now my son, he shall inherit me and I shall inherit him."[94] Zayd was thus officially adopted by the Prophet ﷺ. The great honor conferred upon the young Zayd was a reason for relief and happiness

94. Following that day, Zayd began to be called 'Zayd ibn Muhammad', up until the abolishment of adoption with the 5th and 40th verses of Surah Ahzab.

for both his father and uncle as they returned to their hometowns with their hearts at ease. (Ibn Hishâm, I, 267; Ibn-i Sa'd, III, 42)

Zayd's brother Jabala ibn Hârithah ﷺ narrates another version of the story:

"I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to ask him to send Zayd with me.

'He is here. If he wants to go with you I will not stop him from doing so,' he said. But Zayd did not accept my request, telling him:

'I will never prefer anyone over you.'

Much later I understood that my brother Zayd had greater wisdom than I." (Tirmidhî, Manâqıb, 39/3815)

The Prophet's ﷺ Custodianship of Ali ﷺ

Abu Talib was in financial duress, being the head of a large household. It was owing to this that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ went to his other uncle Abbas ﷺ and suggested:

"As you know uncle, your brother Abu Talib manages a large family and the drought and famine have left him in need like most. Why don't we go to him and talk him into giving two of his little ones over to our custody, to relieve him of some of his responsibility?"

Abbas ﷺ accepted the benevolent suggestion, and together they went to Abu Talib, who after hearing the offer, said:

"Apart from Aqil, you can take any of the children you like", he said.

Muhammad ﷺ eventually took Ali, while Abbas took his brother Jafar ﷺ. Ali ﷺ was raised by his generous caretaker until the beginning of prophethood. (Ibn Hisham, I, 264)

The Children of the Prophet ﷺ

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had a total of six children with Khadijah; two sons, Qâsım and Abdullah, and four daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayya, Ummu Khulthum and Fâtima. As the Arab custom designated one's name in line with the name of his firstborn male, the Prophet ﷺ began carrying the appellation Abu'l-Qasim, after his eldest son.

Qasim did not live long however, passing away at the age of two. Abdullah, the Prophet's ﷺ second son in line, was born within the period of his messengership. But like his brother before him, neither did Abdullah survive, breathing his last at

an early age.[95] Thereupon Âs ibn Wâ'il, a notorious idolater of Quraysh, exploiting the sorrow of the moment, began insulting the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, telling his comrades:

"He is an infertile man who will not leave a son to carry on his name. So you need only wait until his death. You will then be saved from him forever."

This occasioned the revelation of Chapter Kawthar:

اِنَّآ اَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ. فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ. اِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْاَبْتَرُ.

"Surely We have given you *Kawthar*.[96] Therefore pray to your Lord and make a sacrifice. Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity.**"** (al-Kawthar, 1-3) (Ibn Saad, III, 7; Wâhidî, p. 494)

Upon the death of their son at a very early age, Khadijah ﵂ lamented:

"I am overflowing with my dear child's milk. If only Allah had extended his span until at least he completed his feed!"

"He shall complete his feed in Paradise", the Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied.

"If I knew that with certainty, it would definitely ease the pain of his loss."

"I will pray to Allah, if you wish, so you are made to hear his voice", said the Prophet ﷺ.

But showing once more her exemplary submission and dependence, Khadijah ﵂ replied:

"No need. I trust Allah and His Messenger." (Ibn Majah, Janaiz, 27)

The eldest of the daughters of the Noble Messenger ﷺ was Zaynab, born when he was around thirty years of age. Ruqayya was born after her.[97] Subsequent to the birth of Ruqayya was Umm Kulthum, followed right after by Fatimah ﵂, born in the year of the rebuilding of the Kaabah, at which time the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thirty five years old.[98]

The last child of the Noble Prophet ﷺ was Ibrahim, born in Medina, in the eighth year of Hegira. His mother was Mâriya. The birth was nursed by Umm Rafi, whose

95. Ibn Saad, I, 133.
96. *Kawthar* means abundance, a great amount of every given thing. It has been interpreted as including Prophethood, the Quran, Islam, goodness, bliss, intercession, salat and the miracles given to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Authentic narrations report it to be the name of the heavenly pool given to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Paradise, around which the *ummah* will gather in the Hereafter. (Bukhari, Tafsir, 108)
97. Diyarbakri, I, 273-274.
98. Ibn Saad, VIII, 19-26.

husband Abu Rafi delivered the good news of Ibrahim's birth to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who reportedly became quite happy and told those around him:

"Tonight I had a baby son whom I shall name after my grandfather Ibrahim." (Muslim, Fadâil, 62)

Ibrahim also developed an illness when he was around seventeen months old, passing away shortly after.[99]

The Arbitration at the Kaabah

A flood that struck Mecca around then had led to a partial destruction of the Holy Kaabah. The clans of Mecca thus decided to jointly repair it, by demolishing it down to its foundations and reconstructing it. Inadvertently around the same time, news arrived of a vessel loaded with iron, planks, timber, stones and other kinds of construction material, shipwrecked at Shuaybah Pier nearby Mecca. Without wasting time, the Meccans went there and bought the materials necessary for the repair of the Sacred House and the reconstruction soon got under way. They cast lots to determine the type of work that would fall to the share of each and every clan. They shared the work of demolishing and building by casting lots. Before the launch, a wise man from among them said:

"People of Quraysh! Do not mix dirty money into the reconstruction of the Sacred House. Let not money earned from interest or usurped from others against their will be used to fund the repair!" (Ibn Hishâm, II, 210; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah,* II, 305)

But fearing wrath may befall them if they went ahead and destroyed the Kaabah, the Meccans remained undecided. The respect and reverence of the Kaabah prevalent among Arabs was a sacred duty upheld since the Law of Ibrahim عليه السلام. Walid ibn Mughirah, the notable of Quraysh, cut the knot and asked:

"What do you aim for by destroying the Kaabah; good or evil?"

"For the good, of course", they replied.

"My fellow tribesmen! Don't you wish to destroy the Kaabah only for the sake of its improvement? Then, feel at ease, for the Almighty shall never destroy those seeking improvement", Walid assured, shortly after which he struck the first sledge in demolishing the House, and the rest followed suit. (Abdurrazzaq, V, 319)

They raised the walls of the Kaabah reinforcing each row of stone with timber beams, following the order up to the top. The Light of Being ﷺ also labored in the reconstruction with his uncle Abbas. When time came to restore the Black Stone in its spot, each clan vied with one another to have the honor exclusively to itself,

99. See Asri Çubukçu, *DİA,* "İbrâhîm" entry, XXI, 273-274.

sparking a debate that turned into a sour dispute which at one stage looked like it would spill over into a bloody conflict; so much so that the clan of Abduddar made a pact with the clan of Adiyy ibn Kaab to fight until death, with both clans dipping their hands in a bowl filled with blood brought by the Abduddar clan as a symbol of their resolution. Quraysh was left to wait in doubt regarding the fate of the Black Stone for three or four days.

Abu Umayya, the eldest Meccan present, eventually spoke out:

"Friends! We only want what is best, not evil. Do not lock horns out of jealousy! Stop the quarrel! Since we seem unable to settle the issue among ourselves, let us designate the first person to walk past the gates of the Sacred Precinct as our arbitrator and comply with his verdict, whatever it may be!" He was pointing at the Banu Shaybah gate of the Sacred House.

Right at that instant, Muhammad ﷺ walked through the gate. All faces were now full of smiles; after all it was the Trustworthy approaching. Meccan love and respect for Muhammad ﷺ had grown by the day, to the point that were they to slaughter a camel, for instance, they would call him to pray for blessings.[100]

As soon as they saw him, the men of Quraysh exclaimed:

"There is the Trustworthy. We are all happy for him to settle our dispute!"

After they explained the matter to him, the Blessed Muhammad ﷺ elected a person from each clan, then removing his *rida*, he laid it on the ground, placing the Black Stone on it. Then he told each member to hold an edge of the *rida*, thereby getting them to jointly carry the Sacred Stone to its place, whereupon Muhammad ﷺ reinstated the Stone into its spot with his own hands. He thus effectively prevented the breakout of a battle between the clans.[101]

Such exhibition of wisdom and exceptional virtue were but foresigns of a prophethood that was to raise the Noble Man in the near future above every other prophet before him. People were little aware that the young Muhammad ﷺ, born and raised in Mecca, would in due course become a prophet. Many devout souls still persevering on the path of *tawhid* were conscious of the coming of the Prophet of the Final Hour, sensing the time was near. One such man was Quss ibn Saidah.

The Speech of Quss ibn Saidah

The leader of his clan, Quss ibn Saidah was a poet and an adherent of the religion of Isa عليه السلام. The sermon he gave during the Ukaz Fair to a crowd that included the

100. Abdurrazzaq, V, 319; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidaya,* II, 304.
101. Ibn Hisham, I, 209-214; Abdurrazzaq, V, 319.

Prophet to be ﷺ, in which he spoke of the awaited coming, is remembered for its wisdom:

"People!

"Come, listen, learn and take a lesson!

"Whoever lives dies, whoever dies perishes and whatever is bound to happen happens. Rain falls, grass grows and children are born to take over the place of their parents. Then they all depart. Occurrences are ceaseless; they all follow up on one another.

"Beware and lend an ear to my words! The skies are filled with news, the ground with lessons to be taken. The earth is a mattress stretched out and the skies a lofty ceiling. The stars will expire and the seas will come to a rest. Whoever comes does not stay and whoever leaves does not return. Who knows? Is it that they are so comfortable where they are that they remain there or are they withheld and put to sleep?

"I swear that there is a religion more beloved to God than the one you now follow.

"And a Prophet of God will come; and his coming is near. His shadow hovers over your heads. Blessings to him who believes in the Prophet and basks in the light of guidance. Woe to him, who rebels and opposes Him!

"Woe to those who squander their lives in ignorance!

"Mankind!

"Beware of heedlessness! Everything is mortal. Immortality lies only with the Almighty, who is One, without partners, without a like. He is the only One worthy to be worshipped. He begets not, nor is He begotten.

"Abundant lessons wait to be taken from those who have come to pass.

"People of Iyad! Where are your fathers and forefathers? Where are the people of Ad and Thamud who built exquisite mansions and abodes of stone? Where is the Nimrod and the Pharaoh, who beside himself in worldly riches said to his people 'Am I not your greatest lord?'

"The Earth ended up grinding them all in its mill. Even their bones have now rotten away, scattered. Their abodes stand deserted, now inhabited by dogs. Do not ever become heedless like them! Do not tread their path! Everything is mortal, only the Almighty is not.

"There is many a passage to enter the river of death, but alas, no way out! All things great or small migrate. Whatever befalls all shall befall you too!" (Bayhaqi, Kitabu'z-Zuhd, II, 264; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 234-241; Haythami, IX, 418)

When he made this beautiful speech, a short time after which he passed away, Quss ibn Sâidah was of course not aware that the future he was announcing—the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ—was present listening. But Quss's entire tribe believed in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once they were made aware of him.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is reported to have told their delegation:

"Never could I forget the speech given by Quss ibn Sâidah at the Ukâz Fair, when mounted on a camel, he said, 'Whoever lives dies, whoever dies perishes and whatever is bound to happen happens.'

The Blessed Messenger ﷺ then asked them whether there was anyone remaining among them who could repeat his speech. They answered that almost everyone could, a response that made the Light of Being ﷺ very happy.

Thereupon, Abu Bakr ؓ also said he could repeat from memory the famous speech as he was also present at the time, confirming his avowal by reciting Quss ibn Sâidah's speech in full.

Following Abu Bakr, a man from the tribe got up and recited a poem of Quss ibn Sâidah, clearly informing of how a great Prophet would appear from among the Hâshimites. (Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah,* II, 234-241)

About Quss ibn Sâidah, the Prophet ﷺ has said:

"May Allah have mercy on Quss ibn Sâidah. He will be resurrected as a separate nation in the Hereafter." (Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah,* II, 239)

The Retreat of the Prophet ﷺ to the Cave of Hira before the Mission

As the advent of Prophethood drew near, the Messenger to be ﷺ often found himself delving into the depths of contemplation, in seclusion, distant from the public eye. At times he would set out from his home and leave Mecca far behind him, to seek the haven of places silent. Many a time on the way, he would hear the outlying stones and the trees on the path greet him with the words, 'peace be upon you Messenger of Allah'. In hope of making out the owner of the voices, he would look around, but see only trees and stones.[102]

102. Ibn Saad, I, 157.

Later, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, "I remember there being a certain stone in Mecca that used to greet me before the arrival of my Prophethood. I could identify its place even today." (Muslim, Fadâil, 2)

Confirming this are the words of Ali ﷺ:

"The Messenger of Allah and I were going to a certain place in Mecca once, during our years in the town. As we were passing by trees and stones, I could hear them salute him with the exact words, *as-Salâmu alayka yâ Rasûlallah*." (Tirmidhî, Manâqıb, 6/3626)

Muhammad ﷺ had made a habit of regularly retreating to the Cave of Hira[103] in Ramadan for well nigh the entire month, taking even greater care to feed the poor and disadvantaged. Circumambulating the Kaabah each time he returned home from the Cave had also become routine.[104]

The Prophet to be ﷺ always despised his tribe's worshipping of idols, perpetually distancing himself from the practice. His worship in seclusion consisted of contemplating the creation of the skies and earth, like his grandfather Ibrahim عليه السلام and gazing at the Kaabah from the overlooking Cave.[105]

Muhammad ﷺ used to take with him to the Cave small supplies of food and drinks, returning to Khadijah رضي الله عنها once they finished to refill, only to once again go back to the Cave.[106] On occasion, he would also take Khadijah رضي الله عنها with him.[107]

Contemplating in seclusion in the Cave of Hira, the Light of Being ﷺ would frequently see lights and hear voices, which led him to fear that the experiences could be premonitions related to soothsaying and sorcery. Concerned, he would voice his anxiety to Khadijah رضي الله عنها, saying:

103. Hira is the name of a cave in the mountain, known as the *Jabal'un-Nur*, or the Mountain of Light, where the Blessed Prophet ﷺ received his first ever Revelation. Situated to the northeast of Mecca at a distance of approximately five kilometers, the Cave of Hira occupies an important place in the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. The Cave, a few meters below the peak of the mountain, in fact consists of a tunnel-like passage wedged amid slabs of rock naturally piled upon one another. The Kaabah stands in clear vision through the entrance of the Cave. Only as high as one can stand, the width of the Cave barely allows one to lie down; though overlooking the surrounding areas, including the Kaabah, it provides an ideal hideaway for contemplation. Before the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Hanifs of Mecca too made most of the opportunity for contemplation provided by the Cave, one of whom was Abdulmuttalib, the Prophet's ﷺ very own grandfather, who having firm belief in Allah ﷻ, and the Hereafter as the abode of reward and punishment, would escape to the Cave and commit himself to worship. (Fuat Günel, *DİA*, "Hira" entry, XVIII, 121-122)
104. Ibn Hishâm, I, 253-254.
105. Aynî, I, 61; XXIV, 128.
106. Muslim, Iman, 252.
107. Ibn Hishâm, I, 254.

"I am afraid, Khadijah, of being a soothsayer, when by the Almighty there is nothing I hate more than soothsaying and idols!" But Khadijah ؓ would only have words of consolation:

"Do not say that, cousin.[108] Allah would never make you a soothsayer." (Ibn Saad, I, 195)

The period of seclusion before the mission was a preparatory stage for the Prophet ﷺ, like a seed pushing forth from beneath the soil. The exact nature of this preliminary period of preparation, however, will forever remain a secret to us. But it was there that the seeds of faith were laid and the fire of eternal bliss was ignited; and the Revelation of the Quran, the guidance for all humanity, first started.

On the face of it, the retreat of the Blessed Prophet to the Cave was prompted by the general misguidance of the people and his inexpressible grief over the injustices committed by the corrupt Meccans; yet in reality the withdrawal was simply a preparation of the heart of the Noble Messenger ﷺ towards immaculate purification whereupon the Holy Quran could be flawlessly communicated to the perception of entire mankind. This was virtually an instance of a spiritual spark stirred by the grounding of a high voltage of electricity, an intimate secret between the Almighty and His Beloved, in a secluded cave remote from prying eyes. Just as raw iron becomes steel through an inner propensity, the time at Hira was for the flourishing of the Prophet's ﷺ predisposition to become the recipient of Divine Revelation and assume a burden too heavy for ordinary human beings to carry. It is inconceivable to even imagine a conscience that would not shatter to pieces in trying to grasp this secret or a human language that could perfectly express its gist.

Understood from the retreat and seclusion of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ at the Cave of Hira and many an *itikaf* he regularly performed during the later years of his life, is the fact that no matter how great a deed one may perform, spiritual perfection will forever remain out of reach short of retreating to seclusion to call the self into account and contemplate the flow of Divine Power vibrant throughout the universe. This is a minimum requirement for all Muslims. As for those set to become guides for the rest, they need to spare even more time for contemplation and reflecting on the self.

From the first verse to the very last, the Sacred Quran trains one in the art of contemplation, instilling servanthood to the Lord at the center of all thought. Only then does faith become an intrinsic identity, prompting one to seek the pleasure of the Almighty at all times and places. And with the manifestations, through wisdom,

108. Colloquial terms like cousin or nephew are commonly used by Arabs to address one another. They do not necessarily imply a blood relation.

of the flow of Divine Splendor and Power in the heart, the servant gradually gains greater proximity to the Lord, attaining the ultimate aim.

Among the most vital aspects for a Believer is *muhabbetullah*,[109] the love of Allah ﷻ. After faith, the most important catalyst for gaining Divine Love is through constant contemplation of His blessings and grace, deliberating over His Majesty and Power and then incessantly remembering and invoking Him with the heart and tongue.[110] To realize these states in the truest sense of the word can be achieved only through protecting the heart from the pomp and concern of the world by retreating to seclusion.

One thing needs to be brought to attention here, that is to say, what is intended by *khalwat* or retreating to seclusion here is not fleeing all together from the community and taking up permanent residence in caves, mountains or remote dwellings. Such a move would run counter to the practice of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his Companions.

One only needs to be reminded of the words of the Prophet ﷺ himself:

"A Muslim who lives in the community and endures the torment that comes with it is of greater virtue that he who stays remote from them and their distress." (Tirmidhi, Qiyamat, 55)

Many activities of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, from shepherding to taking active part in the Fijar Battles and the Hilf'ul-Fudul guild, his business endeavors, and his assistance in the rebuilding of the Kaabah, testify to his lively presence in society even before his advent as prophet. A part of all the virtuous activities of his society, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ equally made sure to stay away from their vices, never crossing paths with them.

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109. Pleading the Almighty for His Love in his prayers, the Blessed Prophet would pray:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّی اَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِی يُبَلِّغُنِی حُبَّكَ.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ اَحَبَّ اِلَیَّ مِنْ نَفْسِی وَاَهْلِی وَمِنَ الْمَاءِ الْبَارِدِ.

"Allah! I ask you for Your Love, the love of those whom You love and the deeds that will lead to Your Love! Allah! Make Your Love dearer to me than myself, my family, my possessions and even cold water!" (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 72)

110. In interpreting the *ayah*, يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا **"Believers…Remember Allah plentifully"** (al-Ahzâb, 41) Ibn Abbas ﷺ has stated:
"For each compulsory deed Allah ﷻ, has decreed His servants, He has imposed a limit, exempting at the same time those with legitimate excuses. From this, however, His remembrance (*dhikr*) is excluded, for which Allah ﷻ, has not designated a specified limit. Neither will he accept the excuses of those who abandon His remembrance, apart from those who have lost their sanity. He has commanded each and everyone to be in a constant state of remembrance." (Tabarî, XXII, 22; Qurtubî, XIV, 197)

The essence of retreating into seclusion is to improve one's condition. To become cured, medicine must be taken on time at the right amount. Taken excessively, it is sure to procure harm instead of remedy.[111]

An Overview of the Blessed Prophet's Childhood and Youth

Allah ﷻ, brought His Beloved to the realm of being by filtering him through the noblest and purest of lineages beginning with the first page of the book of humanity. Bestowing upon this lineage a preeminence above others in many respects, the Almighty made each and every ancestor of the Prophet ﷺ a person honored and respected during his or her time, as indicated exquisitely in the following couplet:

A rose is so for being a rose at its core,
Only a line of roses would bear a Prophet forth…

Beginning with Adam ﷺ, the first man and Prophet, an oath was taken from every single Prophet to believe in the Final Messenger ﷺ and disclose the news of his coming, which has been bolstered by many incidents alluding to the awaited arrival. Allah ﷻ, thus introduced His Beloved Prophet, whom He was to grant to humanity, with all his signs, easing the path for His right-minded servants to affirm their faith in him once he appeared.

By leaving him an orphan without parents, the Almighty Himself undertook the training of the gracious soul exclusively, imparting unto him the best of conduct. Giving him the sour taste of the greatest vulnerability and helplessness one can endure, the Glorious enabled him to reach the apex of mercy, compassion and altruism with regard to the people he was to be entrusted with in the near future.

Protecting His beloved from the repugnance of the Age of Ignorance, the Almighty did not allow even the slightest blot of vice to mar the clean sheet that was his life, ensuring thereby the manifestation of the zenith of virtue in his conduct.

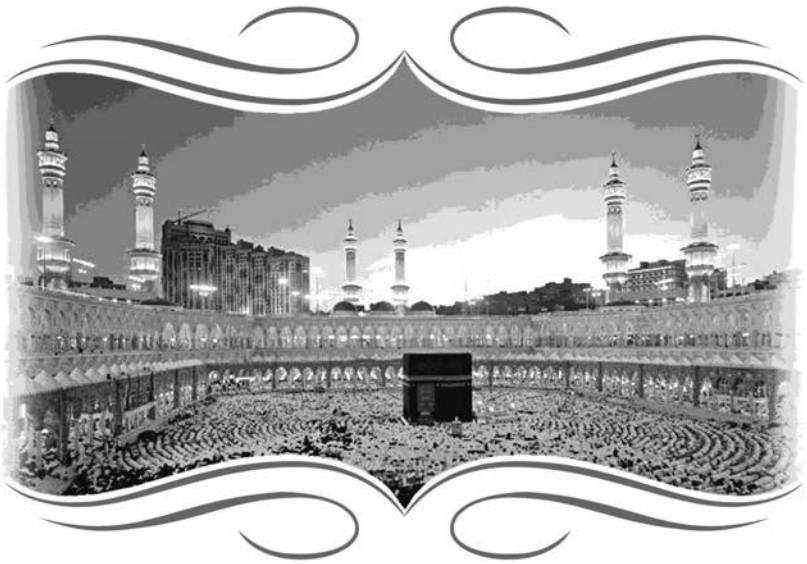
People knew him for his virtues of trustworthiness, dependability, sincerity, generosity, nobility and loyalty, and preeminent features like intelligence and prudence, placing their trust in him in all their affairs. The Almighty combined in him all things beautiful and the most exemplary attributes, conceded even by his enemies. It was they who, after all, had named him *al-Amin*, the Trustworthy, well before the time of prophethood. The arbitration of the Blessed Messenger ﷺ at the Kaabah testifies to his inimitable position in the eyes of Meccan notables. It never even crossed their minds that there could be any untruth to his words or that his moral fiber could harbor any misgivings. They never doubted the sublime level

111. Bûtî, p. 79-82.

of his sincerity whenever his aid was sought and things depended on him for the better.

Character wise, the Almighty had created the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the most excellent manner and ensured he lived accordingly, as he was going to constitute the best example for the rest of mankind and steer them onto the path of guidance. In essence, man becomes attracted to figures of exceptional character, and not to those in possession of worldly goods. However praiseworthy geniuses are, people only follow those with exemplary disposition.

The Meccan Period of Prophethood



CHAPTER TWO

THE MECCAN PERIOD OF PROPHETHOOD

The Inception of Divine Revelation: Truthful Dreams

After an upright youth and exceptional perfection that manifested through a blameless family life, the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the cause of all creation, became prophet at forty. Six months prior to his fortieth year, the Divine Majesty inaugurated a sacred school for him in Mecca at the Cave of Hira.

These edifying and enlightening sessions, in a manner that eternally remains a secret between him and his Lord, saw the Blessed Prophet ﷺ receive Divine training, without any book or pen, at the end of which he became ready to receive Divine Revelation.

During the early part of the six-month phase of preparation, the Prophet to be ﷺ underwent experiences in a form that has since come to be known as 'truthful dreams' (*ar-ruyâ-us'sâdiqah*), where things would develop in the exact manner in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had previously seen in his dreams. In relation, Âisha ﵂ narrates:

"Revelation sent to the Messenger of Allah first began in the form of truthful dreams in his sleep; lucid dreams, which turned out true as clearly as the morning light." (al-Bukhârî, Bad'ul-Wahy, 3)

Since Prophethood is a responsibility of enormous magnitude, the Archangel Jibril ﵇ at first appeared to him only in his dreams, in order to ease the process of preparing him for the difficulties to come, and embed the love of the mission in his heart.

According to a report from Alqama ibn Qays, whatever is sent to Prophets, whether advices, commands or prohibitions, is always revealed first in dreams, only later to be disclosed in the authorized form of Revelation.[112]

Dreams thus count as one of the ways through which prophets receive Revelation, illustrating which is the following from the Quran:

يَا بُنَيَّ اِنِّى اَرٰى فِى الْمَنَامِ اَنِّى اَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرٰى...

112. Ibn Kathîr, al-Bidâya, III, 55.

"Son! I saw in my dream that I offer you in sacrifice… Now what is your view?" (as-Saffât, 37/102)

It should be borne in mind that even though the eyes of Prophets may sleep, their hearts do not.[113] Therefore, there is no barrier to prevent them from receiving Revelations even in their dreams.

As regards the truthful dream, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, during the later part of his life:

"One-forty-sixth of Prophethood consists of truthful dreams." (al-Bukhârî, *Tâbir*, 26; Muslim, *Ru'yâ*, 6)

It is interesting that this six-month period corresponds exactly to the one-forty-sixth of his twenty-three-year period as Prophet.

113. al-Bukhari, Manâqıb, 24.

THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF PROPHETHOOD: THE CALL IN SECRET

The First Revelation and the Interval

Having completed the six-month preparation toward perfecting his spiritual development so that he was now ready to receive Divine Revelation, Muhammad ﷺ was now forty years old

It was the seventeenth day of the holy month of Ramadan.[114] The Noble Prophet was in the Cave of Hirâ as usual, when Jibril عليه السلام suddenly appeared and said:

"Read!"

"I cannot read", answered our Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Thereupon, the Angel seized and constricted the Prophet ﷺ so hard that he left him almost unable to breathe.

"Read!" Jibril عليه السلام then ordered once more.

But the Light of Being ﷺ responded in the same manner:

"I cannot read!"

The Angel then seized him for the second time, compressing the Prophet ﷺ until he had not strength to remain on his feet, repeating the command once again:

"Read!"

"I cannot read!" answered the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as if urging the Angel to indicate what exactly it was he wanted him to read.

Jibril عليه السلام then forcefully squeezed the Light of Being ﷺ for the third time and then released him, beginning shortly thereafter to reveal the very first Revelation:

اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِى خَلَقَ. خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ.

اِقْرَاْ وَرَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُ. اَلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ. عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ.

114. Ibn Saad, I, 194.

"Read: In the name of your Lord Who created; created man from a clot. Read; and your Lord is the Most Bounteous; who taught with the pen…taught man that which he knew not." (al-Alaq, 1-5)

With this Divine Command, the revelation of the Sacred Qur'ân, the greatest benevolence of the Lord for the whole of mankind, began its long course of revelation through the person of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

It was thus these *ayah* of the Clear Quran that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ received first from the gates of Heaven as a source of grace and vigor. Jibril عليه السلام departed not long after and the Prophet ﷺ returned home to Khadijah رضي الله عنها trembling from the unbearable fright of the moment:

"Cover me, Khadijah, cover me!" he was saying.

After a few moments, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ recounted the experience to his wife, our mother Khadijah رضي الله عنها, the noble woman with whom he lived an upright family life for the rest of humankind to emulate. Anxiously, he asked her:

"Who is going to believe me now, Khadijah?"

But the noble woman reassured her life companion:

"I assure you that Allah will never embarrass you; for you protect your kin, assume responsibility for those who cannot do so for themselves, give charity to the needy, do greater good than anyone else, treat your guests with honor and respect and assist those striving to do good. I will believe you and be the first to do so, even if nobody else does. Let me be the first you invite onto the path you call!"

These gracious words thus made Khadijah رضي الله عنها the first person to testify to the truth of her noble husband and help him in his arduous mission.

In other words, what Khadijah رضي الله عنها was implicitly telling her husband was that only good can come out of good and benevolence could only engender benevolence, and nothing else. Rightly so, she could only expect the unfolding of a bright future from an immaculate past of moral uprightness, as if to echo the words of the Quran soon to be revealed:

هَلْ جَزَآءُ الْاِحْسَانِ اِلَّا الْاِحْسَانُ

"Is there any Reward for Good - other than Good?**"** (ar-Rahmân, 60)

Khadijah رضي الله عنها thereupon took the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Waraqa ibn Nawfal, her paternal cousin, one of the exceptionally rare people who had never worshipped idols during the Age of Ignorance. With knowledge of Hebrew, Waraqa was similarly conversant with the Bible. Now in his elderly years, he was no longer able to see.

"Listen, cousin, to what your nephew has to say", Khadijah ﵂ said, upon arrival.

"What is wrong, my nephew?" then asked Waraqa curiously, which is when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ recounted what he had seen.

Recognizing the greatest reality of all concealed within what had been explained to him there and then, Waraqa's face glowed with a radiant smile, before becoming engrossed in a brief but deep meditation.

"What you saw", Waraqa then remarked, "was but the Great *Namus* (Jibril) sent by the Almighty to Musa. If only I was still young when you would begin the Call… If only I would live to see the day your people expel you from your town."

"And they will expel me from my town?" asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

"Yes", replied Waraqa. "There has not been a Prophet who has called to the Religion and not faced enmity and hostility and ultimately been driven out of his hometown. But if it happens that I live to see the days of your Call, I will run to your aid."

Not long after the conversation Waraqa passed away; and Revelation, likewise, came to a temporary standstill (*fatrah*). (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Wahy, 1; Anbiya, 21; Tafsir, 96; Muslim, Iman, 252)

In the verses revealed afterward, Allah ﷻ, was to address His Prophet in the following:

وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِنْ اَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِى
مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْاِيمَانُ وَلٰكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَهْدِى بِهٖ مَنْ نَشَآءُ
مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَاِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِٓى اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

"And thus did We reveal to you a Spirit of Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor what the faith was, but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants; and most surely you show the way to the right path." (as-Shura, 52)

اِنَّآ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ كَمَآ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيّٖنَ مِنْ بَعْدِهٖ

"Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nuh, and the Prophets after him…" (an-Nisa, 163)

As regards the fact that the foremost word of the very first *wahy* revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the command "Read", the wise men of heart have rendered the following interpretation:

"Read! Read everything! Read the Book of Allah! Read His Signs! Read the book that is the universe! Read in order to attain guidance, to distance yourself from deviance! Read to complete your faith! Read in the name of Allah! Read in the name of your Lord who created you! Read in the name of Him who even though He created man from a clot of blood, still gave him the opportunity to read, to understand and become enlightened, and put to practice what has been understood! Read in the name of Allah who has blessed man with the ability to read, the grandest grace of all! Read in order to learn…Read each line drawn throughout the universe by the Pen of Might! Read in the name of Allah who has taught man what he did not know…"

In classifying himself during the spiritual stages he outgrew, Mawlana Rumi used the term *raw* for the time he spent reading books of exoteric content, *cooked* during the phase reading the mysteries of the universe, and *burnt* during his reading of Divine mysteries which virtually reduced him to ashes.

The command "read" conveyed through the *ayah* is of great importance; though the importance is matched by the condition that this reading ought to be in the name of Allah ﷻ. It shows the manner in which this reading must be undertaken.

"Reading" is not so much an external activity as it is a process of refining and cleansing the heart spiritually to the point where it becomes receptive to the *Book* and Wisdom. Suggested by the command, therefore, is the ability to read with the heart, the focal point of manifestations. More clearly, it requires the universe be perceived as a book, the pages of which the heart turns to read wisdoms and Divine mysteries therefrom; the gist of it all, that is to say, is for human beings to read, comprehend and live the universe, themselves, and not least, the Holy Quran.

From the first Revelation, the following conclusion may also be derived:

One must begin all noble activities in the name of the Almighty.

Human beings, created from a clot of blood yet given the most beautiful form, must never forget their vulnerability and insignificance before Divine Power.

اَلَّذِی عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ. عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ یَعْلَمْ.

"Who taught by the pen; taught man that which he knew not." (al-Alaq, 4-5) inform human beings of the importance of knowledge, at the same time reminding them of the fact that whatever is learnt is learnt only by being taught by the Almighty, an enormous Divine blessing in itself.

Man must therefore always be conscious of the Greatness of his Lord and resist the urge to become ingrate.

Revelation slowed to a lengthy silence following the first revelation. In a way, this was to prepare the Blessed Prophet ﷺ for the revelations to come. Receiving Divine Revelation was such an enormous undertaking that conceiving it was certainly not something easy. Underlining this fact are the words of the Almighty:

اِنَّا سَنُلْقِی عَلَیْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِیلا

"Soon shall We send down to you a weighty Message." (al-Muzzammil, 5)

After the initial stage of truthful dreams, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was overcome with anxiety upon suddenly seeing the Angel of Revelation right in front of him. Only with the comforting words of Khadijah and the confirmation of Waraqa did his heart feel at ease. Now, he enthusiastically desired for Revelation to resume, almost growing impatient. Time and again, he would go to Mount Hira, the place where he received Revelation for the first time, and wait in hope for it to come once again.

The greatest support during the hiatus came from none other than the honorable Khadijah, a depth of spirit, elegance and grace the Noble Prophet ﷺ was never to forget. Following her death, whenever he sacrificed stock, he would always make sure to pay tribute to his late wife by sending a share of the meat to her relatives. For the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she always remained a cherished and unforgettable memory.

The life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is replete with incredibly admirable manifestations, unseen in Prophets before him. It was only him that Allah ﷻ, addressed as His "Beloved". Again, among the entirety of Prophets, only he was granted the gift of Ascension, the *Miraj*.

The preeminence of the Noble Messenger ﷺ was confirmed by virtue of him leading the entire prophets in salat at the Masjid'ul-Aqsa. The لَنْ تَرَینی mystery of Musa عليه السلام thus transpired in him in the form of قَابَ قَوْسَیْنِ اَوْ اَدْنَی.[115]

115. لَنْ تَرَینی: "You shall never see me!" (al-Araf, 143). On Mount Sina, Musa عليه السلام was subjected to training in preparation for speaking with the Almighty. He was made to fast for thirty days, completed to forty with a further addition of ten, which elevated him from the ego-dominated life and prepared him for the conversing that was to take place between him and the Almighty. Allah ﷻ, did not speak to Musa عليه السلام through the medium of a language or a sound, much rather with His eternal attribute of *Kalam*, or Speech, which was not heard or even sensed either by Jibril عليه السلام, or the seventy men brought to stand witness. Musa عليه السلام, in the face of this manifestation, lost sight of himself. Forgetting whether he was on Earth or in the Hereafter, he traversed beyond space and time. A forceful desire awakened in him, fuelled by a grand love and rapture, to see the essence of the Almighty, in response to which came the Divine decree: "You shall never see Me!" And when Musa عليه السلام involuntarily insisted on

Salat, the moment of union with the Real, was thereby presented to the mass of Believers to come, as a reenactment of the Ascension within the climes of the heart. Commanded, at the outset, to be performed fifty times a day by the *ummah*, the number of salats per day was eventually reduced to five, as a result of the repeated pleas of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Though an unlettered orphan, through Divine teaching and training, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ became a guide to the whole of humankind, a translator of the realities of the realm of the unknown, the teacher of the school of truth. As expressed by Ziya Pasha:

At such a school was he a learner
That the Almighty was his personal teacher

Musa عليه السلام had conveyed certain laws. Dawud عليه السلام excelled through the prayers and psalms inspired to him by Allah ﷻ. Isa عليه السلام was sent as an exemplar of virtue and piety. Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ came with all of these. Pronouncing laws, he at the same time taught ways of refining the self and praying to the Almighty with a pure heart. The paramount virtues he taught, he epitomized throughout his life. He advised not be beguiled by the deceiving dazzle of the world. Simpler said, he embodied all the rights and duties of the entirety of prophets before him. The nobility of both lineage and conduct, of beauty and perfection were personified in him.

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gazing at the Essence of the Divine, the Almighty told him to turn his gaze towards the mountain, and that he could have his wish of gazing at the Essence of the Divine granted, on the condition that the mountain would remain in one piece upon the Almighty's manifestation thereon. When a light of Divine Essence trickled forth from behind innumerable veils and manifested itself to the mountain, the mountain shattered, the terrifying sight of which made Musa عليه السلام faint. Upon regaining consciousness, he repented to Allah ﷻ, for having overstepped his boundary.

One can draw the following lessons from the incident: There is no single place in the universe that can stand an *essential* manifestation of Allah ﷻ. This is attested by the eruption of a mountain, which could not even endure an infinitesimal amount of Divine manifestation. Thus in terms of His Essence, Allah ﷻ, is hidden (*ghayb*), but apparent through the manifestations of His attributes, for which reason that in describing Believers, the Quran reiterates that they "اَلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ", "…those who believe in the *ghayb*".

Another fact of the matter is that human cognition is incapable of comprehending the manifestation of the Essence of the Almighty, something verified by the fainting of Musa عليه السلام. Accordingly, there is no manifestation of Divine Essence in our world, due to the inadequacy of the cognition of both man and jinn to bear the intensity of its appearance.

"قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنَى: "And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer…" (an-Najm, 9): On the night of Miraj, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was delivered beyond the *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*, the Lote Tree, never before passed by any being, including Jibril عليه السلام. Taking place there was a union, whose nature remains impossible and too confidential for our understanding to grasp, disclosed to cognition simply as "a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer…".

These are expressions articulated to accommodate our levels of understanding, in depicting the two grand manifestations which Musa عليه السلام and Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ were subjected to.

Without a doubt, the fortieth year of his life proved to be the greatest turning point in the course of the history of humankind. He had spent forty years in an ignorant society, during which most of the perfections he later was to promote remained a mystery to nearly all. He was not known yet as a man of state. Little were aware of his eloquence. Speaking of his potential as an illustrious commander was one thing; he was not renowned even as an ordinary soldier.

Before that, nobody had heard him talk about the histories of peoples and prophets of the yesteryears, or of paradise and hell. Reputed only for leading a life of utmost virtue and solitude, that momentous return from the Cave of Hira where he was entrusted with Divine duty, marked a momentous change.

The Reality of Revelation and the Ways of its Disclosure

Wahy, or Revelation, contains a variety of meanings; a rapid sign, script, correspondence, inspiration and secret talk, just to name a few. In principle, it signifies what Allah ﷻ, informs his Prophets of whatever He wills, in whichever manner He pleases, as stated by the Quran:

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ اَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا وَحْيًا اَوْ مِنْ وَرَآئِ حِجَابٍ
اَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِاِذْنِهٖ مَا يَشَآءُ اِنَّهُ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ

"It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by Revelation, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with Allah's permission, whatever Allah wills. He is Most High, Most Wise." (as-Shura, 51)

Narrated by Aisha ﵂, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was once asked about the manner in which he received Divine Revelation, to which he responded:

"Sometimes it comes in a clanging sound, which is the most burdensome way I receive it. Once I comprehend and commit to memory what Allah has declared, the Angel then leaves me. And at times the Angel appears in human form. He talks to me and I immediately comprehend it." (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Wahy, 1-2; Muslim, Fadail, 87)

Judging from numerous narrations, Muslim scholars have concluded that:

1. Revelation sometimes came in the form of truthful dreams during sleep, which later took place in the exact way they were seen.

2. Words to be revealed would at times be instilled in the Noble Messenger's ﷺ heart, without the Angel appearing.

3. As was the case in the Hadith of Jibril,[116] the Angel of Revelation would assume the form of a human being and impart the Revelation.

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbas ؓ, the incident recounted below provides a splendid example of revelation in the latter sense:

"I was next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with my father Abbas. By the side of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was also another man and they were whispering to one another, for which reason the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not pay much attention to my father. When we left, my father asked me:

'You saw how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not take much notice of me, didn't you?'

'Yes, father', I replied. 'But he was talking to another man next to him', I added.

Thereupon we quickly returned next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

'Messenger of Allah', explained my father. 'I said so and so to Abdullah and he told me that you were whispering to a man next to you. Was there really someone by your side?'

'Did you actually see him, Abdullah?' the Messenger of Allah ﷺ then asked me.

'Yes', I replied.

'That was Jibril', he then said, 'and he was the reason I could not attend to you.'" (Ahmad, I, 293-294; Haythami, IX, 276)

4. Revelation every so often came in the form of a terrifying clanging sound. By the end of the process, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ would have grasped every word conveyed by the Angel.

5. On two occasions, Jibril ؑ brought Revelation in his actual angelic form. First of these was subsequent to the period of interval, as the Noble Prophet ﷺ was descending down the Cave of Hira, while the second was during the Night of *Miraj*, by the Lote Tree, *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*.

6. Revelation, on occasion, would be disclosed directly to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as part of Divine acceptance and grace, without the medium of the Angel of Revelation, as was the case during the *Miraj*.

116. One day while the Blessed Prophet was at the Masjid, Jibril -aleyhissalâm- came to him in the form of a man and asked him questions regarding *îman*, Islâm, *ihsân* and the signs of the Day of Judgment, with the aim of helping the Companions learn their religion. The hadith explaining this incident has thereafter been known as the Jibril Hadith. (See Bukhârî, Iman, 37; Muslim, Iman, 1, 5)

7. It was also the case that Jibril ﷺ would sometimes disclose the given Revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his sleep. Some commentators are of the view that such was the way Chapter Kawthar was revealed.

Some Companions provide an account of how, during the process of Revelation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would become overwhelmed, become flustered, close his eyes, and put his head down. The Companions, too, would put their heads down, not daring to look up or peek at the Noble Messenger ﷺ, until the process was concluded.

Sometimes a sound resembling the humming of bees could be heard near his face upon the arrival of Revelation. During those moments, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would take quick breaths, with drops of sweat trickling down his forehead even during the coldest of days.[117]

Zayd ibn Thabit ؓ,[118] among the scribes of Revelation, has stated that the intensity of a given revelation would correspond to the weight of its content. If the revelation consisted of a Divine promise or assurance, then Jibril ﷺ would appear in human form, a situation that would not cause much difficulty for the Noble Messenger ﷺ. But if Divine warnings and threats of punishment were being sent down, then the Revelation would arrive amid the sound of a most terrifying clanging.

If the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was riding on camelback at the time the Revelation arrived, incapable of withstanding its weight, the legs of the camel would buckle and it would be forced to crouch. Indeed, upon the revelation of the third *ayah* of Chapter Maida, it was as if the legs of his camel Adba, were on the verge of breaking, forcing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to dismount.[119]

Zayd ibn Thabit ؓ recounts:

"I was sitting on the floor next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with his knee on mine. Right at that instant he began receiving Revelation. Suddenly it was as if there was nothing else on Earth heavier than his knee. It was only a matter of time, I thought, before mine were crushed." (Ahmad, V, 190-191)

117. Bukhari, Bad'ul-Wahy 1/2, Umra 10; Muslim, Fadâil 87, Hudûd 13; Tirmidhi, Tafsir 23/3173; Ahmed, V, 327.

118. Zayd ibn Thabit ؓ was among the scribes of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. At the time of the Noble Messenger's ﷺ migration to Medina, Zayd was an eleven year old orphan. As a child, he had committed to memory seventeen chapters of the Quran. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised him to learn Assyrian and Hebrew, both of which he became conversant with within a matter of forty days, supervising the Prophet's ﷺ Assyrian and Hebrew correspondences afterward. But one of his most honorable services was, with the aid of another two Companions, the assembling of the Quran. He passed away in Medina in the 45th year of Hegira, having narrated 92 hadiths.

119. Ahmed, II, 176; VI, 445; Ibn Saad, I, 197; Tabarî, *Tafsîr,* VI, 106.

In denial of the fact that the Sacred Quran is the word of the Almighty, some orientalists have contended Revelation to be nothing but inner inspirations felt by the Prophet ﷺ as a result of profound contemplation and meditation. Such allegations only betray the ignorance set deep within their hearts, their weakness of judgment, and the zeal of their enmity.

The fear felt by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ upon seeing the Angel for the first time during the initial arrival of Revelation, clearly disproves the possibility that it could have been an inner, personal case of hallucination.[120] The Prophet's ﷺ receiving of Revelation consists of his conceiving an external reality, not related in any way to the state of his inner being. That Jibril عليه السلام forcefully hugged the Messenger of Allah ﷺ three times, urging him on each occasion to "read" before letting him go, is confirmative of the fact that the source of Revelation is not internal, but external, from Allah ﷻ.

Besides, the temporary interval of Revelation invalidates, in no uncertain terms, the claims of Revelation being an internal phenomenon transpiring within the mind of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ as a consequence of his profound contemplation. The sudden break in Revelation and the urgent desire nurtured by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for it to resume, visibly proves that it was an occurrence of an external nature, independent of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ will.

In addition, as reminded by the verse below, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was entirely unaware that he would be receiving Revelation in the first place.

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُوا اَنْ يُلْقٰٓى اِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ اِلَّا
رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيرًا لِلْكَافِرِينَ

"And you did not expect that the Book would be revealed to you, but it is a mercy from your Lord, therefore be not a supporter of the unbelievers." (al-Qasas, 86)

One only needs to glance at the difference of style between the Quran and Hadith to be further convinced of the revelatory source of the former.

Such incidents would come to pass at times, that in spite of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ needing an urgent answer, the arrival of an enlightening Revelation would be postponed; as was the case with the *Ifk* or the Slander Incident and the recurring questions many a time asked by the Israelites. Had the Quran been, as claimed, a fruit of the Prophet's ﷺ meditation, it would have been better for the Messenger of

120. Hallucination: Originally from French, in psychology, the term denotes sensations more commonly observed in cases of schizophrenia or paranoia, where the person undergoes experiences without the stimulation of his senses and imagines things that have no reality of their own.

Allah ﷻ to provide an instant answer rather than put himself in an awkward position by waiting for a Revelation instead.

What's more, Revelation would at times inform of the Prophet's incorrect stance regarding certain issues or command things counter to his preferred tendency. Even a slight deferral of communicating a certain command would lay the Blessed Prophet ﷺ open to Divine criticism. All this exposes the illogicality of the accusations holding the Quran to be a product of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ personal contemplation.

Just to recount a relevant incident, while communicating Islam to a few notables of Quraysh, Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum ؓ, a blind Companion who had previously entered the fold of Islam, came up to the Noble Messenger ﷺ, insisting him teach him some of the truths revealed by the Almighty. Preoccupied at the time with trying to convince the prominent figures of Quraysh however, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took little notice of him, even frowning a little upon Ibn Maktum's insistent attitude to learn, for which he was subject to the following rebuke of Allah ﷻ:

اَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى. فَاَنْتَ لَهٗ تَصَدّٰى. وَمَا عَلَيْكَ اَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى. وَاَمَّا مَنْ جَآءَكَ يَسْعٰى.
وَهُوَ يَخْشٰى. فَاَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهّٰى. كَلَّآ اِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ. فَمَنْ شَآءَ ذَكَرَهُ.

"As for him who considers himself free from need (of you) to him you do address yourself; but no blame is on you if he would not purify himself. And as for him who comes to you striving earnestly and with fear of Him, from him you divert yourself! Nay! Surely it is an admonishment; so let him who pleases mind it." (Abasa, 5-12)

In times subsequent to the above Revelation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would at every given opportunity seek to compliment Ibn Maktum with kind words. Upon seeing him, he would sometimes comment:

"Greetings, Ibn Maktum, on behalf of whom my Lord rebuked me!" (Wahidi, p. 471)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ would, on occasion, receive Divine Commands in concise (*mujmal*)[121], for which he would not provide a subjective interpretation, so long as they remained unelaborated by the Almighty. A case in point is the following verse:

121. *Mujmal* are expressions that contain succinct meanings, which until further clarification, remain obscure.

لِلّٰهِ مَا فِى السَّمٰوَاتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ
وَاِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِىٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ

"Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's; and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it…" (al-Baqara, 284)

Upon hearing the above Revelation, apprehensive that they might be held responsible for even the fleeting thoughts in their hearts, the Companions worriedly asked:

"How, Messenger of Allah, are we supposed to cope with that?

In response, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stated:

"What now? Are you trying to say 'we hear, yet we rebel' like the People of the Book before you? Better for you to say instead 'we hear and we obey…we entreat You, our Lord, to forgive us, for to You is every return!'" (Muslim, Iman, 200; Ahmad, I, 233; Wahidi, p. 97)

Owing to the concise meaning of the relevant Revelation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not provide further clarification but insisted that the Companions keep faith in Allah ﷻ. It was not long afterwards, however, that an *ayah* revealed anew shed light upon the previous:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا
تُؤٰاخِذْنَآ اِنْ نَسِينَآ اَوْ اَخْطَاْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَآ اِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهٖ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا
وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَآ اَنْتَ مَوْلٰينَا فَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Allah does not impose upon any soul a burden greater than it can bear; for it, is the benefit of what it has earned and upon it, the evil of what it has wrought: Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake! Our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us! Our Lord! Do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us! You are our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people." (al-Baqara, 286)

Thanks to the above *ayah*, the Companions had now become aware that they would not be held accountable with regard to thoughts which they could not help.

That the Noble Messenger ﷺ recoiled from offering a clarification for a *mujmal* revelation, over and above being a Prophetic reality, provides at the same time another incontestable evidence that bears out the Divine source of the Quran. Had that not been the case, then an explanatory revelation would have been redundant, and a subjective explanation would have sufficed as enough clarification. The absence of the occurrence of such a scenario supports the case for the miraculous nature of the Holy Quran.

Another irrefutable fact that proves the Divine source of the Quran lies in its providing news of the unknown, that is, of *ghayb*.

In like manner, the Quran also provides a factual account of history. Neither a scholarly institution, nor a single cultured individual existed in 7th century Mecca, with insight into the historical knowledge presented therein. All they boasted in the name of historical knowledge was nothing beyond a few local Persian legends that swarmed with contradictions, brought to town by its seasonal traders. Not only does the Quran offer a coherent and a total picture of history, it is not, in any way, of the kind that can be articulated by any individual, no matter how intelligent and inventive he may be.

Furthermore, an intelligent person ought to stop and think: Could an unlettered man, raised in an ignorant society, really be the source of the exceptional meanings of the Quran, other than through obtaining it from a Divine source? Of course not!

And this shows that all that has been conveyed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has sprung forth from its very source in Divine Revelation.

The Holy Quran has also foretold events of the future, which have come to pass in the exact manner foretold, when their times came. The Quran perennially leads the way, and science only follows in its wake.

Undeniably, the following incident recounted in the Quran provides only one example of many.

To the Pharaoh, who, being on the verge of drowning in the whirlpool of the Red Sea wanted to seize the rope of belief as a last resort, the Almighty declared:

آلْـٰٔنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

"What! Now? When hitherto you had rebelled and been of the wrong-doers?" (Yunus, 91), rejecting his desperate bid to affirm faith amid the throes of death, before continuing:

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ اٰيَةً
وَاِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ اٰيَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ

"But We will this day deliver you with your body that you may be a sign to those after you, and most surely the majority of the people are heedless to Our signs." (Yunus, 92)

Zamakhshari interprets the *ayah* in the following:

"We shall throw your naked corpse in a corner by the shore and protect it, in its wholeness, preventing it from decomposing, as a lesson for those after you in the centuries to come." (Zamakhshari, III, 24)

Recent discoveries have found Pharaoh's corpse washed upon the shore, prostrate. This was his very final state before death. Dreading the horrible scenes he had been made to witness in his dying moments, he wanted then to surrender to belief, but since his stance was out of desperation, it was not accepted. Thus, approximately three thousand years following that plight, and having survived decay, his corpse has emerged, and as was proclaimed by the Quran, exposed to be exhibited to humankind as warning. The corpse is exhibited at the British Museum as we speak: only one among many instances of the miracles of the Quran set to survive till the Final Hour.

But as the main objective of the Quran is to communicate *tawhid* and thereby call humankind to guidance, such miraculous instances of scientific and historical nature are only secondary. It must not be forgotten, that compliant with the Divine proclamation:

وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ اِلَّا فِى كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

"….nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a Clear Book", (al-Anam, 59), truths of every single kind are hidden in the Quran. Accordingly, the Holy Quran is a perfect narrative of all realities engraved across the universe, comprising the nucleus of all truths within. This characteristic of the Quran, necessitated by its being a miracle, will be better appreciated through the unfolding of events and in proportion with progress in human knowledge.

Had such knowledge, hidden in the depths of the universe as part of Divine Will, received detailed exposition in the Quran instead of its present concise form, then libraries would not have been spacious enough to accommodate its voluminous size. Besides, as human beings are prone to reject any claim unjustified by the expertise of the time, belief in the Quran would not have lasted intact until the Final

Hour. Just to give one example, even if the reality of television had been exposed then as we know it now, people would have balked at believing it until physically seeing it before their eyes, which would have given them reason to reject the Quran; and hence the reason as to why the Quran, though having embodied every single truth, voices most of them in an undetailed manner.

All the issues dealt with by the Quran are conducive to the greater aim of *tawhid*, the impulse behind its touching upon scientific facts. A distinctive miracle of the Quran is that it survives in all times and places until the Final Hour. This is another testimony to a splendor revealed all the more with every moment and discovery.[122]

Unable to stomach the magnificence of the Holy Quran and the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, some orientalists have resorted to making the absurd and illogical claim of describing the Prophet's ﷺ state, while receiving Revelation, as an 'epileptic seizure'.[123] We need only mention the following in response:

After undergoing an epileptic seizure, one is overcome with exhaustion and soreness, leaving him or her in great pain and a disturbed state of mind. Yet, not only did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ not undergo any of these said sufferings, he would also consider a pause in Revelation as a break in proceedings, longing for its arrival, and becoming delighted beyond description when it did.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ would not undergo the experiences characteristic during Revelation all the time, often remaining in usual manner.

During an epileptic seizure, a fact known to medicine, one loses all capacity to think and all consciousness, remaining oblivious to everything around him; yet the Revelation that the Noble Prophet ﷺ received were conveying to humankind the magnificent *ayah* of the Quran, boasting the most perfect blueprints of law, morality, piety and the most splendid accounts of history.

The violent tremor known to take over an epileptic during seizure was never witnessed during the coming of Revelation.

122. For relevant examples, see, Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ, *Rahmet Esintileri,* Istanbul 2001, p. 184-239.

123. The observable changes undergone by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ during the receiving of Revelation, the details of which are explained above, have lead some orientalists to conceive the experience as an epileptic seizure, centered upon which they have conjured further arguments, even taking it so far as to make the inconceivable allegation of dubbing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ mentally insane. They were even able to persuade the French National Academy of Medicine to at least consider the scientific value of the case, hoping for the eventual confirmation of their claim. In 1842, a committee consisting of the most outstanding doctors of medicine at the time assessed the claims, finally submitting a long and elaborate report, rejecting the claim as medically unacceptable. Those interested can refer to *Rapor*, a 1996 translation of the report from French to Turkish by Prof. Feridun Nafiz Uzluk.

Epileptics tend to utter nonsensical even absurd words during seizure. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was never seen to engage in such behavior; not only that, spilling from his tongue were the most eloquent and meaningful words mankind can ever imagine.

Moreover, medically proven is the fact that no single body has the power to endure a seizure as lengthy as that needed to utter six-thousand odd verses.

Such deliberate allegations, which lack the least sense, are therefore only an outcome of an inability to come to terms with the truth of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Prophethood: *Nubuwwah* and *Risalah*

Allah ﷻ, willed to address His servants through exceptional figures raised from among them, by entrusting them with Prophethood; a Divine routine revealed in the Quran as:

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ

"Of some messengers We have already told you the story; of others We have not…" (an-Nisa, 164)

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآؤُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ

"We did indeed send, before you, messengers to their (respective) peoples, and they came to them with Clear Signs." (ar-Rum, 47)

Beginning with the first man, through every epoch of history, the Almighty continued sending His Prophets, as *nabi* and *rasul*, as a mercy for human beings.

Nubuwwah, or prophethood in a general sense, denotes the ambassadorship between the Almighty and His rational servants in regulating their affairs, both Here and in the Hereafter.

A *rasul* is a person, who receiving Revelation, is furthermore obliged to pass on what has been revealed in him to others. A *nabi*, on the other hand, is a person who receives Revelation whether or not he is obliged to pass it on. Generally, a *nabi* is sent to further communicate and reinforce the *sharia*, the canon law of a *rasul* sent before him. Therefore each *rasul* is also a *nabi*, though not every *nabi* is a *rasul*. There are many ahadith which indicate that the terms *nabi-rasul* have a universal-particular relation: that said, the Quran uses both terms interchangeably.

To the question that may arise as to why the Almighty does not address His servants directly but instead through Prophets, the following response could be rendered:

It is contrary to the mystery of the great trial that comprises the underlying reason of the existence of the universe, for the Almighty to disclose His Revelation through a direct addressing of humankind. Faith would have then lost the honor and worth it has, in its pertaining to an *unknown*. Receiving commands and prohibitions directly from the Almighty, humankind would have had no choice but to believe, for being directly conscious of the reality of Allah ﷻ. By preventing human beings from making a willful choice of either good or bad, this would have in turn rendered the awaiting reward and punishment nonsensical.

On the other hand, human beings are of different levels of understanding, power and ability, for no other reason that they each have different functions to carry out in life. Had all human beings been talented, there would have remained certain things nobody would have liked to do. The fulfilling of all outward functions of the world, from the lowest to the highest, has necessitated that human beings be created in various grades of ability.

The greatest leaders, teachers and guides in the history of mankind are prophets. It is imperative that persons, who are to guide society and moreover show them the right way and endure the torment and hardships that may come therefrom, are endowed with supreme abilities and an endless reserve of patience. Unless they are blessed with high qualities and supreme features of character that people will admire, swaying the masses and guiding them will remain impossible.

Even with ordinary leadership, a person may not become a leader without possessing higher qualities than those under him. Even if he does somehow find himself as a leader, he cannot be successful, for no other reason that the insufficient are never truly recognized as leaders.

It is for that reason that Prophets are acknowledged as naturally endowed with greater qualities. Yet, they cannot be prophets solely through their personal will, by simply putting to use the talents they have from predisposition. Among them, prophethood is exclusive to those handpicked and appointed by the Almighty. Simpler put, neither *nubuwwah* nor *risalah* are earned: one cannot acquire them through effort. Instead, Allah ﷻ, appoints whoever He wills from among His servants.

So the *ayah* declares:

اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

"Allah knows best with whom to place His message." (al-Anam, 124)

In contrast, selecting an ordinary person to carry Revelation is equally incompatible with Divine Will, as not everyone is competent enough to conceive

and convey the Word of the Almighty. Prophets have therefore been specially selected from among the most competent, chosen to carry the heavy burden of prophethood, by virtue of the innate endurance with which they have been gifted.

The Attributes of Prophets

All Prophets have certain common attributes, classified as *sidq*, *amanah*, *fatanah*, *ismah* and *tabligh*. Belief in prophets comprises these principles.

Sidq marks the honesty and truthfulness of prophets in communicating Divine verdicts, commands and prohibitions, and in all the words they utter. They always uphold honesty in their words and actions, both of which are mirrors of one another. It is inconceivable for them to lie. Their trustworthiness is praised by the Almighty in the Quran:

وَاذْكُرْ فِى الْكِتَابِ اِبْرٰهِيمَ اِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدّيقًا نَبِيًّا

"Also mention in the Book Ibrahim: He was a man of Truth, a Prophet." (Maryam, 41)[124]

In emphasis of the impossibility for Prophets to deviate from *sidq* even for a split second, Allah ﷻ, states:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْاَقَاوِيلِ. لَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ. ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ.

"And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart…" (al-Haqqa, 44-46)

Their trustworthiness is of a magnificence even attested to by their foes. Below are just a few of numerous other examples:

During the first days in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ publicly announced the Call, standing on a rock on the Hill of Safa, he declared to those of the Quraysh who were present:

"People of Quraysh…If I were to tell you that enemy cavalrymen are staking out the outskirts of that mountain, or in that valley, waiting to pounce on you and seize your belongings, would you believe me?"

Without a second thought, they replied:

"Certainly! For until now, we have known you to be a man of your word and we have never heard you tell a lie…" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 26)

124. Also see, Maryam, 54, 56; Yûsuf, 46.

One of the questions posed by Heraclius, the Emperor of Byzantine, to Abu Sufyan, still a nonbeliever, in order to obtain more information on the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, was:

"Has there ever been a time where he has failed to keep his word?"

In spite of being in staunch defiance of the Noble Messenger ﷺ at the time, Abu Sufyan replied, unswervingly:

"No…Whatever promise he makes, he always keeps." (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Wahy, 1, 5-6; Muslim, Jihad, 74)

Ubayy ibn Khalaf, a Meccan idolater, was among the most inveterate enemies of Islam. Prior to the Hegira, he would threaten the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, remarking:

"I am raising a horse, feeding it the best fodder. There shall come a day when I will mount on it and kill you!"

On one occasion, however, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ broke his silence and responded:

"Allah willing, I shall be the one who ends up killing you."

On the day of Uhud, that dim-witted idolater was searching all over the battlefield for the Noble Messenger ﷺ, screaming:

"If he survives today, it means I am gone!"

With this thought in his mind, he was able to come within a very short distance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and get ready to attack him. Seeing him further away moments before, the Companions wanted to finish him off, only to be prevented by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, telling them:

"Let him come!"

As Ibn Khalaf got closer, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ grabbed a spear from the hands of a Companion.

As Ibn Khalaf charged on his horse, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointed the spear, which lightly scraped Ibn Khalaf's neck as he rode past. But even with that little a blow, he fell off his horse and rolled on the ground awhile, before getting back on his feet horrified and fleeing back to towards his ranks, at the same time shouting, with his eyes about to fly out of their sockets from fright:

"I swear that Muhammad has killed me!"

The idolaters rushing next to him to inspect his wound were all assuring:

"It is only light scrape…"

But unsatisfied, he kept on remarking:

"In Mecca, Muhammad had told me that he would kill me. So I swear, even if he was to spit on me, it would be enough to take my life!"

He continued bawling.

"How could you cry so much over a little scrape?" Abu Sufyan eventually told him off, to which he responded:

"Do you know who did this to me? This is a wound caused by Muhammad. I swear by Lat and Uzza that if they were to inflict on the whole folk of Hijaz the pain I am feeling from this scrape, they would certainly all perish. Back in Mecca, Muhammad had told me he would end up killing me. There and then I knew he was to be the cause of my death…I knew there was no way of saving myself."

Ubayy, that ingrained enemy of the Prophet ﷺ, died on the return, within days of reaching Mecca. (Ibn Ishaq, p. 89; Ibn Saad, II, 46; Hakim, II, 357)

Even an idolater with a close acquaintance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ firmly believed in the truth of his word.

Abu Maysara explains:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had once gone next to Abu Jahl and company. Upon seeing him, they said:

'We swear, Muhammad, that it is not you we are denying. For as far as we know you are an honest and a truthful man. It is only what you have brought that we refute!' Revealed thereupon was the *ayah*:

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ اِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِى يَقُولُونَ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ
وَلٰكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاٰيَاتِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

'We know well how their talk grieves you, though in truth they deny not you but it is the signs of Allah that the wicked negate.' (al-Anam, 33)" (Wahidi, p. 219)

Requiring neither an extra word nor speech, the expression of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ alone was the ultimate embodiment of honesty; such that simply the sight of his face compelled Abdullah ibn Salam, a distinguished Jewish scholar, to remark:

"Such a face can never lie", as he accepted Islam there and then. (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 43; Ahmad, V, 451)

Uttering a lie on behalf of the Almighty is impossible for a man who never spoke a lie, even jokingly, during his entire life prior to being given prophethood. Indeed, the Noble Messenger ﷺ regarded lying as a sign of hypocrisy, emphatically prohibiting his *ummah* from speaking a word of untruth.[125]

He states in a hadith:

"So long as one continues to lie and carry the intention to do so, his heart is branded with a black spot. Then the spot grows, turning his entire heart black, to the ultimate point he is recorded among the liars in the Divine sight." (Muwatta', Kalam, 18)

Nufay ibn Harith ﷺnarrated:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ one day asked, three times:

'Should I inform you of the gravest of the great sins?'

'Please do, Messenger of Allah', responded we.

'Ascribing partners to Allah and rebelling against the parents', he said. He then straightened up from where he had been leaning, assumed a seated position, and added:

'And also –and listen carefully- lying and perjury'. So many times did he repeat that that fearing he would tire himself, we wished for him to stop." (Bukhari, Adab, 6; Muslim, Iman, 143)

The Quran underlines the importance of truthfulness as follows:

قَالَ اللّٰهُ هٰذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَآ اَبَدًا رَضِىَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

"Allah will say, "This is a day on which the truthful will profit from their truth: theirs are gardens, with rivers flowing beneath,- their eternal Home; Allah well-pleased with them, and they with Allah. That is the great salvation!" (al-Maida, 119)

Amanah denotes the extreme trustworthiness, dependability and honesty possessed by the outstanding figures that are prophets. Even nonbelievers looked upon them with trust. Together with signifying their trustworthiness and reliability in general matters, the attribute of *amanah* in particular implies their fidelity with regard to Revelation, their faultless communicating of the Divine commands and prohibitions to people, neither adding nor subtracting a word from it.

125. Bukhari, Iman, 24; Muslim, Iman, 107.

Allah ﷻ, only entrusts His most honest and dependable servants with the honor and duty of prophethood, not the treacherous. The verses below indicate that Prophets have constantly been truthful in reminding their people:

اُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّى وَاَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ اَمِينٌ

"I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord's mission: I am to you a sincere and trustworthy adviser." (al-Araf, 68)

اِنِّى لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ اَمِينٌ

"I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust." (as-Shuara, 107)[126]

As a matter of fact, the title *al-Amin*, or the Trustworthy, given to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would resonate equally loud among the ranks of idolaters. Ever suspicious of their own friends, when they had to, the idolaters routinely entrusted their belongings to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Indeed, even just before the journey of Hegira, the idolaters had many of their possessions entrusted with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who, in a display of inimitable loyalty, had left Ali ؓ behind in Mecca to return the goods to their owners, at the risk of death.

al-Amin virtually became the Noble Prophet's ﷺ second name and the only name the Meccans used to call him around the twenty-fifth year of his life.[127]

Those up in arms over the Black Stone issue prior to the Prophet's ﷺ arbitration were jubilant upon seeing him approach from a distance towards them, excitedly shouting 'al-Amin is coming', placing the settlement of their disagreements in his dependable hands. Never could there be a slight question mark raised against his trustworthiness, neither by a Companion who would not think twice of sacrificing his all for him, nor by an enemy intent on putting him to death.

Equal to the trustworthiness of the Prophets, so is Jibril ؑ the carrier of Revelation, attesting to which the Almighty said:

اِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ. ذِى قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِى الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ. مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ اَمِينٍ.

"Verily this is the word of a most honourable Messenger, endued with Power, possessing rank before the Lord of the Throne, with authority there, and faithful to his trust" (at-Takwir, 19-21) Revelation, is therefore, carried to the *Amin* on Earth, through the *Amin* of the Heavens.

126. Also see, as-Shuara, 125, 143, 162, 178; ad-Dukhân, 18.
127. Ibn Saad, I, 121, 156.

Fatanah implies that prophets possess the highest level of intelligence, reason and insight among mankind. They have been gifted with strength of memory, a piercing cognition and solid power for judgment and persuasion.

Fatanah is not a tedious exercise of reason and logic; it much rather represents a level of comprehension beyond genius, the expression of reason, prudence and insight that abides with the heart. To impeccably complete their duties, prophets need to be in possession of peerless intelligence. They would otherwise be unable to put forward to the people the case that they have been sent for and convince them of its truth.

Prophets solve even the most obscure and intricate problems with ease. Wrapping even the most complex issues in the shroud of ease enables their words to be put across with clarity to people of various levels of understanding.

A quality that has transpired in various styles in each prophet, it could be said the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is a quintessence of *fatanah* or prudence. As aforementioned, by virtue of a matchless display of prudence and insight, the Noble Messenger ﷺ, who happened to be walking through the gate of the Kaabah at the time, was able to settle the great dispute that arose pertaining to the replacement of the Black Stone, and prevent what otherwise would have certainly ended up as massive bloodshed between rival clans.

Similarly, his competence when battling in the way of Islam, his prudence in peace, and in particular, during the Armistice of Hudaybiyah, the wisdom in his capture of Mecca and its eventual guidance without the shedding of a drop of blood, his extraordinary discretion and justice in Ta'if, are exemplary displays of *fatanah* lying beyond the reach of any single mortal.

A Muslim should likewise seize a share of the *fatanah* of prophets and put to use the gift of reason in the most efficient way possible. Knowing how to say what is to be said, where and when to say it, and no less the behavior to adopt in saying it, is essential.

The delicate approach adopted by Jafar Tayyar ﷺ, for instance, in informing the Abyssinian Negus of Islam, is worth enormous significance in terms of exhibiting the ideal prudence of a Believer. When the Negus, then a Christian, insisted that Jafar Tayyar ﷺ recite a few verses of the Quran, instead of reciting, for example, Chapter Kafirun that defies the disbelievers in full force, Jafar chose to recite Chapter Maryam, which speaks highly of both Isa عليه السلام and his mother. Enthralled by the *ayah* read aloud by Jafar, the Negus, reduced to tears, exclaimed:

"There is no doubt that what I have just heard and springs forth from the same source of light as that which was brought by Jesus", and he entered the fold of Islam not long after. (Ibn Hisham, I, 358-360)

Tabligh refers to how prophets inform people of the Divine Word truthfully, just as they have been commanded. Their invitation contains neither addition nor subtraction. Among the common attributes of Prophets, *tabligh* is one of their most important duties, as is thus declared in the *ayah*:

يَا اَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَاِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ

"O Messenger! Deliver what bas been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message…" (al-Maida, 67)

In carrying out their responsibility of *tabligh* prophets have encountered numerous obstacles, in the face of which, however, they never allowed for compromise. Their lives abound in exemplary cases of such experiences.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ began his invitation to Islam by extending it to his closest kin, acting in accordance with the given time and place, making sure to observe the state of mind and the level of comprehension of his subjects: in compliance with the principle of gradualness he made the most of every opportunity, replacing difficulty with ease, promoting glad tidings rather than attracting hate.

Having devoted his entire life to the call of Islam, in his Farewell Sermon, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ asked the Companions who were present:

"Have I accomplished my duty of conveyance?" After receiving an affirmative response he announced:

"Bear witness, O my Lord!" with satisfaction over a mission accomplished.

Thus all Believers must also live up to the *tabligh* methods exemplified by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, to the best of their ability; for calling to Islam is an obligation upon all Muslims.[128]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ states:

"Upon seeing something improper, one should set it right with his hand; if unable to do so, then with his tongue; if unable to that too, then he should despise it with his heart, and that is the weakest faith." (Muslim, Iman, 78)

The absence, in society, of people who enjoin the good and forbid the wrong, sooner or later results in the wrong becoming customary and accepted as something normal. An evil not eradicated in time after a while becomes ineradicable even if it were wished to be so. Right and wrong become muddled, and as the truth takes flight people forget about their Lord. Consequent upon this is the total destruction of that society. Avoiding such devastation requires that an especial importance is given to the activity of *tabligh*.

128. See Âl-i İmrân, 104, 110.

Ismah points to the fact that prophets are immune from falling into sin, whether it is great or small. Owing to this quality, prophets have been safeguarded from becoming mired in the swamp of *shirk*, both before and after their prophethood. In like manner, it is impossible for them to have a memory lapse or make an error while extending to people the Revelation they receive from the Almighty.

Had Prophets not been endowed with the quality of *ismah*, then the truth of what they communicated would have remained dubious, a shortcoming which would have cast doubt over their being the proof and witness of the Almighty on Earth.

According to *Ahl'us-Sunnah*, prophets never commit major sins. Though it is possible for them to commit blunders, unintentionally and in compliance with many underlying reasons, they are never left as they are, but are immediately rectified and cautioned through Revelation.

The commission of these involuntary mistakes called *zalla*, is motivated by the underlying wisdom of giving Prophets a little taste of insufficiency in comparison with the Almighty and in preventing others from idolizing them through a reminder that they are, after all, human.

The conduct of prophets must be of a kind that can be taken after. People, otherwise, would be prone to dismissing the Divine commands with the excuse that what Prophets enjoin is beyond human capability. In total disregard of this fact, there were even those ignorant enough to expect prophets to be raised from among angels, to whom the Quran tendered the following answer:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِى الْاَرْضِ مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنّينَ
لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولا

"Say: Had there been in the earth angels walking about as settlers, We would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as a Messenger." (al-Isra, 95)

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ

"Nor did We give them bodies that ate no food, nor were they exempt from death." (al-Anbiya, 8)

Likewise protecting their followers from making the same blunders and showing them the right kind of action, requires prophets to provide an example.

For instance, after his tribe remained indifferent to his nine-hundred-and-fifty-year call to the Truth, Nuh عليه السلام pleaded:

فَدَعَا رَبَّهٗٓ اَنِّی مَغْلُوبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ

"Therefore he called upon his Lord: I am overcome, come then to help!" (al-Qamar, 10)

As his tribe met its ruin by drowning amid the Deluge in consequence of his prayer, Nuh عليه السلام again pleaded, overflowing this time with fatherly compassion:

رَبِّ اِنَّ ابْنِی مِنْ اَهْلِی

"Surely, Lord, my son is of my family!" (Hud, 45)

Yet, for wanting his son salvaged while calling destruction upon his tribe, Allah ﷻ, sent him the following warning:

اِنِّی اَعِظُكَ اَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

"…I admonish you lest you be of the ignorant!" (Hud, 46)

That admonishment to Nuh عليه السلام has provided a precedent for all Believers to come until the Final Hour.

The attribute *la yukhti'*, or infallibility, is exclusive to the Almighty alone. It is impossible for mortals to avoid error. Be that as it may, a Muslim should strive to minimize his errors, to ensure which the Quran, on numerous occasions, advises *dhikr*, that is to say the togetherness of the heart with Allah ﷻ, since it is impossible to do injustice or commit an error while the heart says "Allah".

So declares the Almighty:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللّٰهَ فَاَنْسٰيهُمْ
اَنْفُسَهُمْ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

"And be ye not like those who forgot Allah; and He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors!" (al-Hashr, 19)

Again, with reference to those ignorant of this aspect:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِی ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

"Woe to those whose hearts are hard against the remembrance of Allah; those are in clear error!" (az-Zumar, 22)

Besides the five prophetic attributes mentioned, namely *sidq*, *amanah*, *fatanah*, *tabligh*, *ismah*, there are an additional three, solely exclusive to the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

1. The Chosen Prophet ﷺ is the Beloved of Allah, the greatest of all Prophets, the noblest of humankind.

Poet Necip Fazıl concisely depicts him as:

Eternity has refined your fragrance,
You are honey, Being is your comb!

2. As the *rasul'us-thaqalayn*, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ has been sent to all man and jinn. The religion he brought is valid until the end of time. Other prophets, on the other hand, were sent for a temporary period of time, with some sent for a certain group of people in particular. In this respect, while the miracles of other prophets have remained exclusive to their times, the miracles of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ extend to all times. The Holy Quran, especially, as the greatest miracle given to him, is set to survive unsullied till the Last Hour, impervious to falsification.

3. He is the *Khatam'ul-Anbiya*, the Seal of Prophets.

On top of all this, on the Day of Judgment, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ will be privileged with leading the Great Intercession, *shafaat'ul-uzma*, and be given the Praised Rank, that is to say the *maqam'ul-mahmud*. It is that Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, who will hence intercede on behalf of the sinners of his *ummah*, an intercession that will be accepted.[129]

It is an indisputable fact that loving a person, admiring his character and trying to imitate him, are naturally ingrained tendencies. Pinpointing the most exemplary figures and following in their wake is therefore of enormous importance for human beings. Being of eternal grace and generosity, the Almighty has therefore not only sent Revelation to humankind, but also prophets adorned with the most supreme qualities, quintessential figures who are the living embodiment of Divine Revelation. Such consummate characters they are that they exude perfection in all aspects, be it religious, scientific or moral. In fact, by perfecting certain modes of behavior, each Prophet has rendered an outstanding service to humankind.

Among the Prophets, for instance, a look at the life of Nuh عليه السلام immediately strikes one with a persevering and patient call to the Truth, and an ultimate and passionate dislike of unbelief and its representatives.

129. See Bukhari, Tawhîd, 36.

Dominating the life of Ibrahim ﷺ is a relentless battle against idolatry in an attempt to eradicate it permanently, whereby he provides a unique example of trust and reliance in the Almighty, who, in return, turned the fire of Nimrod into a rose garden for him.

Musa ﷺ spent the bulk of his life struggling against the oppressive Pharaoh and his mob, setting up a celebrated social system for Believers in the shade of the Sacred Law.

The distinctive feature of the call of Isa ﷺ was a tenderness of heart filled with mercy and compassion for human beings. Significant in his call is the promotion of sublime virtues like humbleness and leniency towards people.

In spite of the dazzling and legendary kingship of Sulayman ﷺ, his maintenance of his spiritual state by virtue of gratitude and humbleness, which made him grow ever greater in his servanthood of the Real, commands admiration.

The life of Ayyub ﷺ reveals instances of fortitude against hardships and of thankfulness to Allah ﷻ, at all times, no matter how dire the situation may be.

The life of Yunus ﷺ offers a perfect example of turning towards and attaching to the Almighty with repentance, out of remorse over an error committed.

Even during captivity, Yusuf ﷺ personified the zenith of loyalty to the Almighty and calling to His Path, fending off his attempted seduction by a beautiful woman of wealth and fame, her mesmerizing and tempting call, with lofty purity. His heart, adorned with piety, was virtually like a font of behavioral perfection.

The life of Dawud ﷺ is filled with an excellence of sentiment towards Divine Majesty. Engrossed in His fear and awe, his tearful glorifications and invocations of the Almighty, his turning to Him, earnestly and beseechingly, provide great lessons.

As for the life of Yaqub ﷺ, it is the quintessence of the need to avoid despair even in the darkest hour, to attach one's hopes to the Almighty with steady patience and to never lose hope in His mercy.

Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, the Seal of Prophets, embodied all the known and unknown distinguished attributes of the entirety of Prophets to come before him -124,000 on one account-, and more, representing the apex of virtue and conduct. His celebrated life is a vast ocean of which the lives of all the other prophets are tributary rivers that pour into it.

In order that Religion flourish within an environment of peace and happiness, the family of humankind that began with Adam and Hawwa ﷺ adopted that certain area of Mecca, on which today stands the Kaabah, as the first place of worship. Spread across vast lands thereafter owing to the demands of life, the children of Adam ﷺ continued their life of religion, guided time and again by prophets, remaining loyal to Divine Truths which, since times immemorial, have been exposed to distortion by the ignorant and those bent on destroying religion. By virtue of sending prophets in succession, the Almighty has always mended the damage inflicted, reviving Religion each time with a fresh breath of life. Humankind has thereby been saved, each time, from universal, individual and social disarray.

Making its entrance into the world at long last, at the *asr* mark of its entire history was the Great Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, with whom the life of Religion met its final and grandest display, at the very place in which it had been inaugurated. It is now inconceivable to imagine a greater perfection beyond that of his dispensation, insofar as with him, the regular revival of Religion through the sending of Prophets came to an end, making Islam the religion Allah ﷻ, is pleased with.

On the Humanness of the Blessed Prophet

Allah ﷻ, has reinforced humankind with prophets of their own kind, who dwelled in their midst, and the details of whose lives were quite known to them. In reply to the idolaters' wishes to see a miracle, the Almighty counseled the Noble Messenger ﷺ to say:

قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّی هَلْ كُنْتُ اِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا.
وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ يُؤْمِنُوٓا اِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدٰٓى اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُٓوا
اَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا. قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِى الْاَرْضِ مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ
يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا.

"Say: Glory be to my Lord; am I aught but a mortal messenger? And nothing prevented people from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said: What! has Allah raised up a mortal to be a messenger? Say: Had there been in the Earth angels walking about as settlers, We would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as a messenger"(al-Isra, 93-95)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would remind of his inability to produce a miracle of his own doing, without it being through the permission of the Almighty, no other than the fact that he, too, was after all human. Reiterating this fact on numerous occasions is also the Quran:

قُلْ اِنَّمَا اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحٰى اِلَيَّ اَنَّمَا اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ

"Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is one…" (al-Kahf, 110)[130]

The words below of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ leave no doubt as to him being a human being just like everyone else:

"I, too, am human like the rest of you. You come to me to settle your disputes. Some may have more proofs or be more persuasive, and therefore I may judge in favor of them in line with what I hear. Whoever I have favored in my judgment at the expense of the right of his brother, let him know that I have handed over to him a portion of Hellfire." (Bukhari, Shahadah, 27; Mazalim, 16; Muslim, Aqdiyya, 5)

Prophets were sent not only to communicate revelation, but also to establish a lifestyle compliant with the Divine way, to exhibit an exemplary character under all circumstances and provide a concrete case in point. Since this could only be carried out within a society of human beings, only a human being could have achieved this task. Had there been angels sent instead, verbal communication of the Divine Revelation would have been the only thing they would have been capable of. Being incapable of leading a life in society and therefore unable to relate to their lives and human problems, they would have failed to address the human condition. Human beings would have then come up with the excuse that not being angels, it naturally lies beyond their power to obey the commands and prohibitions communicated by them.

In that respect, being under an obligation to provide an example for his *ummah*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not lead the extraordinary life the authority of being a Prophet would have otherwise granted. He displayed feats of wonder only very rarely and on an individual scale. The majority of the activities that filled his life evolved around the necessities of society, in line with their capacities. For that reason, anyone intent on becoming an ideal merchant, a perfect family man, a superb commander, an administrator, and so forth, can very well derive principles from the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that will allow him to be so.

Society, through history, has held fast to the illusion that a human being cannot be a representative of the Almighty. That prophets have been human, with wives and children of their own kind, carrying the needs of ordinary human beings have been wrongly regarded as deficiencies on their behalf, which has led to brazenly laying the blame on Divine Will. Many a Prophet has been indicted with such a charge by the very people to whom he was sent.

130. For other *ayah* in relation, see, Fussilat, 6; al-Muminûn, 33, 24; al-Anbiyâ, 2-3; Ibrâhîm, 11.

On the other hand, excess love and devotion to certain Prophets by their followers has led, over time, to a belief that they must be superhuman. Glorifying them with extreme intensity, many have seen fit to ascribe their prophet a divine status, thereby falling into idolatry. Some mistook their prophet to be God, others chose to call him the son of God, or even God incarnate, resulting in a corruption of monotheism, and a promotion of anthropomorphism as is the case with Christianity.

The purpose of the emphasis of the humanness of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the Quran and Hadith is to deter the Believers from falling into the error that plagued people before them.

Omar ﷺ retells the following words of the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

"Do not praise me in the excessive manner in which Christians praise Isa, son of Maryam. I am without a doubt a servant of Allah. So duly call me 'Allah's servant and messenger.'" (Bukhari, Anbiya, 48)

In another hadith, we see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ caution a certain group tending to praise him to excess:

"Do not elevate me above a higher rank than I deserve…for Allah had made me a servant before He made me a Prophet." (Hakim, III, 197/4825; Haythami, IX, 21)

Another cause for the Prophet's ﷺ frequent reminder of being human and a servant of the Almighty is his unfathomable humbleness.

Doubtless, many a time, after having enumerated in thankful appreciation the blessings bestowed upon him by the Almighty, he was always quick to adjoin to it the expression, "this is not to boast".[131]

Abdullah ibn Jubayr ﷺ explains:

"Once while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was walking in the company of a few Companions, one of them made a move to veil him from the sun. Upon becoming aware of the man's attempt, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ quickly intervened, putting the veil on the ground, before saying:

'I am human just like you!'" (Haythami, IX, 21)

It should also be remembered, however, that, although human, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is certainly not just like any other human being. As elaborated by a poet:

131. See Tirmidhi, Manâqıb, 1/3615.

"Sure, Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ is human, but he is not like any other. How a ruby fares among stones is how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ fares among human beings."

Another poet puts this reality into the following words:

There is nobody alike in entire history,
On each tongue lives his memory,
Heavens stand for the perfection of his Ascension,
Angels rise admiring his beauty,
The essence of words resides in his personality,
A man, who yet presides over angels in supremacy

The Wisdom behind the Blessed Prophet ﷺ being an *Ummi*

The word *ummi* harbors a variety of meanings, denoting one who has remained pure and unsullied like a newborn, or is unlettered without having received any formal education, as well as signifying Meccans or, in general, the Arabs, with the exception of the People of the Book residing in Arabia.

On the words of the Quran, the Noble Messenger ﷺ was an *ummi*, that is he was unlettered, knowing neither how to read nor write.

Thus states the *ayah*:

اَلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِىَّ الْاُمِّىَّ الَّذِى يَجِدُونَهُ
مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِى التَّوْرٰيةِ وَالْاِنْجِيلِ

"Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the *Ummi*, whom they find written down with them in the Taurat and the Injeel" (al-Araf, 157)

That the Messenger of Allah was unlettered was something also known to the idolaters of the time, who, on the testimony of the Quran, would accordingly allege:

وَقَالُوا اَسَاطِيرُ الْاَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِىَ تُمْلٰى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَاَصِيلا

"They claimed: Stories of the ancients-he has got them written, and these are read out to him morning and evening" (al-Furqan, 5)

The reasons why the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was called *ummi* or unlettered could be listed as follows:

1. He remained as pure as the day he was born, a purity of predisposition through which he was protected from the smear of external knowledge, trained and educated personally by the Almighty instead.

The Quran fittingly indicates:

سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسٰى

"We will make you recite so you shall not forget" (al-A'la, 6)

As also professed by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

"My Lord educated me and made my education beautiful." (Suyuti, I, 12)

Cleaving his chest on three occasions (*sharh'us-sadr*), the Almighty cleansed all negativities from the Prophet's ﷺ heart, replacing them with sublime feelings of peace, serenity, mercy, compassion, faith and wisdom.

2. It serves as a reminder that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was an Arab, not from the People of the Book.

3. It is in emphasis that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was born in Mecca, also known as *Umm'ul-Qura*. *Qaryah*, whose plural is *qura*, is an Arabic word that denotes villages or the smallest settlements. *Umm'ul-Qura*, therefore, means the mother of all settlements, that is to say, the first ever milieu in which human beings settled.

Arabs were on the whole unlettered; they were a people remote from culture, who did not know how to read and write. Allah ﷻ, sent them a Prophet from among their ranks; a quintessential Prophet whose inner blend of purity remained uncorrupted.

The *ayah* describes:

هُوَ الَّذِى بَعَثَ فِى الْاُمِّيّٖنَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيَاتِهٖ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَاِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِى ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

"It is He Who has sent among the Unlettered a Messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom,- although they had been, before, in manifest error." (al-Jum'a, 2)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ sheds greater light on the issue:

"We are an *ummi* people. We neither know how to write, nor calculate." (Muslim, Siyam, 15)

Although being unlettered denotes a lack of knowledge when used for common people, for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ it carries connotations of perfection and superiority. That a Prophet, whose perfection of knowledge and action can leave even the supposedly most cultured in awe, could only be a fabulous proof that he was sent directly by the Almighty.

Allah ﷻ, declares:

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهٗ بِيَمِينِكَ اِذًا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

"And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand, for then could those who say untrue things have doubted." (al-Ankabut, 48)

Unless through Divine Revelation, there is no way known that an *ummi*, simply through inner inspiration, can put together the Holy Quran, a miracle that leaves powerless entire man and jinn, and provide insight into historical facts like the accounts of the Pharaoh, of Musa's عليه السلام mother and Yusuf عليه السلام.

The Quran presents the experiences of past people to humankind in the most evocative manner, in conformity with the demands of contemporary science and standards of the philosophy of history.[132]

Being unlettered, from another perspective, is the minimum requirement for the words of the Quran to have an all-inclusive universality. Reminiscent of the aphorism "the leader of the caravan is always its weakest", to make sure of getting its message across to humankind entire and rendering its application achievable by all human beings, the Quran has in a sense targeted, first and foremost, the level of illiteracy. Such that understanding and living Islam requires as little as being an ordinary, common human being. Coming into play, again, is a similar sensitivity in its taking the motions of the Sun as a measure in determining daily deeds of worship, and those of the Moon in determining the deeds of worship that are monthly or annual.

Having descended to the level of human beings does not mean that the Quran has wished for them to remain on that level, aiming to raise them from illiteracy to being an *ummah* with a Book. To be sure, Islam did establish a brand new civilization, the cornerstone of which was the Holy Quran, to which it referred as *al-Kitab*, the Book.

132. On the other hand, some of the historical accounts provided by the Torah and the Bible conflict with the findings of modern historiography and science. The creation of the universe and its stages, the date of man's descent on Earth, the Deluge are but a few of these conflicting accounts. (See Maurice Bucaille, *Müsbet İlim Yönünden Tevrât, İncîl ve Kur'ân,* p. 53-82, 157-175)

Hilyat'us-Saadah

Hilyah means adornments, jewelry, as well as beauty of spirit and expression. By convention, the term also denotes a verbal description of the appearance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, inasmuch as allowed by the capacity of the words of mortals.

Nahifi avows:

"Surely, if one writes the *hilyah* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and takes some time to contemplate it, Allah ﷻ, will protect the person from illness, troubles and a sudden death. If one takes the *hilyah* with him on a journey, then he will be under Divine protection throughout."

Many Muslim scholars have put forth their views with regard to the numerous blessings of the *hilya* of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. The tradition of memorizing it, motivated by the hope of seeing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in a dream survives in many Muslim countries to this day.

Having said that, equal to the inadequacy of any verbal depiction of the blessed appearance of the Prophet ﷺ, a beauty described as 'light upon light', one must also consider the absolute inadequacy any human being faces when gazing at him and trying to comprehend his reality. A perfect articulation of the beauties of that exceptional being, in whom the Almighty has gathered up all the exquisiteness He has ever bestowed upon mankind, remains impossible. As said by Hakani:

None who knows this has belied,
Among creation, that he has no peer.

These attempted illustrations of the Prophet ﷺ, the Beauty of all Beauties, are simply to console and assuage hearts not fortunate enough to witness the Age of Bliss, ever burning with his yearning. Those who convey the precious descriptions of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ virtually present us with a drop from an ocean. Believers, who have tried to see the ocean through the crystals of those drops, have striven to benefit from his quintessential example, and by virtue of intensifying their love for him, to try to become one with his conduct and morals.

Without a doubt, as compelled by their predisposition, hearts always incline towards the beautiful, with the desire of becoming one with it. The attraction takes hold of the mind, as it exclusively becomes preoccupied with it. Budding in the heart, then, is the desire to become like the beloved, in terms of spirit and morality. Consequent upon taking the beloved as example, one ends up becoming one with him/her. Owing to the tendency of predisposition, it is doubtless that these descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ are sure to increase love and enthusiasm towards him.

As a matter of fact, Hasan ؓ uses the following words to describe his emotional state when asking for a description of the Blessed Prophet from his foster uncle Hind ibn Abi Hala ؓ:

"My uncle Hind ibn Abi Hala used to describe the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the most beautiful style. I used to love it when my uncle described him, for my heart to continue being attached to him and stand firm on his path." (Tirmidhi, *Shamail*, p.10)

Hasan and Husayn ؓ, who could never have enough of listening to others depict the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, likewise, on many an occasion, heard their father Ali ؓ elaborate his graceful appearance, a description they have passed on to future generations.

Yet it gives reason to wonder as to what portion of the reality of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ could really be conveyed through such depictions? Similarly, one can only comprehend the *hilyah* in accordance with the intensity of the love within and in line with the limited content words can at best convey.

Thus, notwithstanding our blatant inadequacy in that respect which we humbly confess, we nonetheless wish to present here a drop from the narrations that have trickled down to us that depict the gracious appearance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. A concise summary of the said narrations reveal that:

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was of medium height, closer to tall.

He had a perfectly balanced stature and a well proportioned body.

Having a wide chest and broad shoulders, there was also a seal of prophethood adorning the spot between his shoulder blades.

His bones and joints were largish.

He was of a pinkish white complexion, like a rose. Shiny like light, his skin was softer than silk. His graceful body was always clean, emitting a refreshing scent. Regardless of whether he had put on fragrance or not, his skin and sweat were more elegant than the most exquisite of fragrances. If one were to shake hands with him, his hands would be immersed all day in the Prophet's ﷺ elegant scent; it was as if roses had gotten their fragrance from him. If the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was to caress a child's head, one could immediately tell the child apart from others, due to his beautiful scent.

Upon sweating, his skin would resemble a rose sprinkled with dew.

He had a dense beard, which he would not allow to grow more than a handful. Upon his passing away, there were around twenty strands of grey hair on his hair and beard.

His eyebrows were the shape of a crescent, with a fair distance separating both.

Located right between his eyebrows was a vein that would visibly swell, whenever the Blessed Prophet ﷺ got annoyed for something in the name of Truth.

He would brush his pearl like teeth with *miswaq*, the frequent use of which he would always recommend.

His black lashes were quite long. His eyes were stunningly big; entirely black where black, and entirely white where white. It was as if the hands of the Divine had garnished them with kohl in past eternity.

As exceptional as the perfection of his spiritual composition was the beauty of his physical appearance.[133]

His face would shine like the full moon. Aisha ﵂ has said:

"So radiant was the Messenger of Allah's ﷺ face that, in the dark of the night, I would make use of its light to put a thread through the eye of a needle."

Between his shoulder blades was a Divine mark attesting to his prophethood. Many a Companion would crave just to kiss it. The disappearance of the seal upon the passing away of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was accepted as confirmation of his demise.[134]

His blessed body underwent no change whatsoever after his bereavement. Staring at the Light of Being ﷺ behind teary eyes, Abu Bakr ﵁ mournfully remarked, moments after he had passed away:

"As your life, so too is your death beautiful, Messenger of Allah", thereupon placing his lips on the forehead of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

It is impossible to adequately describe the profundity of the elegance of his heart.

Never uttering a word in vain, his every word conveyed wisdom and advice. There was not the least place for backbiting and futile talk in his vocabulary. He would talk to people in accordance with their capacities.

He was kind and humble. Although he would never express his joy through excessive laughter, his face always displayed a warm smile to others.

133. See Hâkim, III, 10; Ahmed, I, 89, 96, 117, 127; IV, 309; Ibn Saad, I, 376, 412, 420-423; II, 272; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, VI, 31-33; Tirmidhi, *Shamâil*, p. 15.
134. Tirmidhi, *Shamâil*, p. 15; Ibn Saad, II, 272.

If someone happened to see the Prophet ﷺ, awe would overwhelm him; even a brief conversation sufficed to implant feelings of deep love and affection towards him.

He would treat the righteous with respect, according to their ranks of piety. Receiving a massive share of his kindness and respect were his relatives. It was habitual for him to extend the tenderness he nurtured for his family and friends to the rest of society. He explicitly reminded us of these qualities, saying:

"None of you may become a true Believer until you wish upon your brothers what you wish upon yourselves." (Bukhari, Iman, 7; Muslim, Iman, 71-72)

He would treat his servants inexpressibly well, feeding them whatever he had and clothing them with whatever garments he himself wore. Generous and compassionate, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had struck a perfect balance between courage and kindness.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was a man of his word and always kept his promises. Superior to all in terms of virtue, intelligence and sharpness, he does truly deserve all the praises one can possibly state. With beauty of appearance coupled with perfection of life, he was a sacred being beyond compare in all creation.

He also carried a perpetual look of sorrow. Withdrawn to an uninterrupted state of contemplation, he only spoke when necessary. Though his spell of silence was lengthy, he would complete every sentence he began, conveying the deepest meaning using the least possible words. His words would come out distinctly, like the beads of a necklace. Though he was born with a gentle predisposition, his stature was nevertheless majestically imposing.

He would never get up from his seat when angry. Besides, he would never get angry, unless there was an infringement of right; and given there was an infringement of which nobody took notice, his anger would not subside until the right was restored. Afterwards, he would once again resume his usual composure. He never got angry on his own behalf; he would never develop a vendetta or become quarrelsome over a personal matter.

He would never enter the household of anyone without permission. Once he returned home, he would divide the time he spent there into three parts: the first was for Allah ﷻ, the second for his family and the third for himself, though only by name, as in effect he would spare that time for all kinds of people, both common and eminent, depriving not a single person of his precious time, leaving not a single heart uncaptured.

Each state and deed of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was an expression of Divine Remembrance.

At mosques, he would assume different places for seating, to prevent others from making a habit of sitting in a particular place, wary of the consecration of certain places and sites. He disliked the adoption of conceited behavior in public. Upon entering an assembly, he would take whatever seat available, insisting others do the same.

Whenever a person wanted something from him in sorting out a particular problem, regardless of the importance of the favor, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would never feel at ease until that need was taken care of. Given the impossibility of sorting the problem out, then the Noble Messenger ﷺ would not recoil from at least soothing the person with some comforting and heartening words. He was a confidant for all. No matter what their social classes were, whether rich or poor, wise or ignorant, people would receive even treatment next to him, solely from the vantage of being a human being. All his gatherings were environments teeming with kindness, wisdom, manners, patience and trust, first and foremost in Allah ﷻ, then in each other.

Never would there be a person explicitly condemned for his shortcomings. When there was a need to warn a particular person, the Noble Messenger ﷺ would subtly and gently hint at it, without breaking the person's heart.

"Do not celebrate a disaster that befalls your Muslim brother…for through His Mercy, Allah may deliver him from that disaster and test you", he would say. (Tirmidhi, Qiyamat, 54)

Not only was he ever preoccupied with investigating the concealed flaws of others, he was stern in prohibiting others from getting busy with such ignobility; for Divine decree had banned suspicion of others and inquiring into their hidden faults.

He would not speak, unless it was with an aim to reap the Divine pleasure. Ecstasy would take hold of the assemblies in which he spoke. So enamored would the listeners be while the Blessed Prophet ﷺ spoke, and so intently would they give ear, that in the words of Omar ؓ, had there been a bird perching above any of their heads, it could have remained there for hours on end undisturbed.

The manners and conduct that had reflected onto his Companions were of such force that, more often than not, even asking him questions was deemed to be impudent. Thus they would wait for a desert Arab to perhaps arrive and inadvertently drop in to ask the Noble Prophet ﷺ questions and spark a conversation, from whose blessings and grace they would be in hope of benefiting.[135]

135. Ibn Saad, I, 121, 365, 422-425; Haythamî, IX, 13.

Timid in his presence, there were even those who had waited for two years before plucking up the courage to ask their questions. Due to his imposing appearance, they could not stare at him in the face.

Amr ibn Âs ﷺ has confessed:

"Though I spent a lot of time next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the shyness I was overcome with in his presence and the immense feeling of reverence deep inside always prevented me from lifting my head and staring at his sacred and beautiful face to my heart's pleasure. If they were to ask me, right now, to describe the appearance of the Messenger of Allah, believe me, I could not." (Muslim, Iman, 192; Ahmad, IV, 199)

A person who wished to describe his unique traits could not help but admit to "never seeing anyone alike, before him or after."[136]

During his visit of a certain Arab tribe, Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ was asked by the chief to explain the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"That is impossible", replied Khalid ﷺ. "Words could not suffice!"

"Then at least explain to the best of your ability", said the chief, prompting Khalid to give the magnificent reply below:

"Let me tell you this much: the Envoy reflects the honor of the Sender. Since the Sender is the Lord of the Worlds, the Creator of the Universe, then you imagine the honor of the Envoy!" (Munawi, V, 92; Qastallani, *Mevâhib-i Ledünniyye Tercümesi*, p. 417)

Endowed with an immense degree of beauty, awe-inspiring majesty and a dazzling elegance, he really needed neither an extra proof, nor a further miracle to prove the truth of him being the Prophet of the Almighty.

His morals were the Quran, something gracefully elaborated by Muallim Naji:

Embodied in you is the Quran's beauty, the praise of all things existent,
The Quran is your hilyah written by the Hand of Might

A similar tone reverberates in the words Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi قدس سره, which express how the supreme virtues of the Noble Messenger ﷺ invigorate entire creation:

"How splendidly beneficial he is that thanks to his bountiful existence, pearls billow out of seas, emerald from hard stones and roses from thorns. You would not see a bud that does not smile out of joy, and blossom, in a garden where his beautiful conduct is mentioned." (Diwan, p. 65-66)

136. Ahmed, I, 96.

All beauties had united in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, virtually radiating from his body. Still, nobody has been able to see the beauties of Blessed Prophet ﷺ in their completeness. In the words of Imam Qurtubi:

"The beauty of the appearance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ never fully transpired. Were the entirety of his beauties to be shown in all their reality, the Companions would not have had to power to gaze at him." (Ali Yardım, *Peygamberimiz'in Şemâili* p. 49)

The Noble Messenger's poet Hassan ibn Thabit ﷺ articulates the uniqueness of his nature in the following:

وَاَحْسَنَ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَرَقَطُّ عَيْنٍ

وَاَجْمَلَ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَلِدِ النِّسَاءُ

جُلِقْتَ مُبَرَّءًا مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ

كَاَنَّكَ قَدْ خُلِقْتَ كَمَا تَشَاءُ

"Messenger of Allah…No eye has seen anyone more beautiful than you. No woman has given birth to anyone more beautiful. You were created remote from all shame and insufficiency, as if you were created in your own liking!"

The Resumption of Revelation

The break in Divine Revelation lasted six months. Its resumption is recounted by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

"As I was walking one day I heard a voice from the sky. I lifted my head, and there he was; the Angel that had come to me at Hira, seated on a throne suspended on the horizon. I was terrified. I returned home, urging:

'Cover me…cover me!'

(As I lay covered, Jibril عليه السلام returned; and through him) Allah ﷻ, revealed:

يَا اَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ. قُمْ فَاَنْذِرْ. وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ. وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ. وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ.

'O you who is covered! Arise and warn, And your Lord do magnify, And your garments do purify, And uncleanness do shun!' (al-Muddaththir, 1-5)

Revelation continued uninterrupted thereafter." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 74/4, 5; Muslim, Iman, 255-258)

The Almighty declares:

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

"And certainly We have made the word to reach them so that they may be mindful." (al-Qasas, 51)

The unbroken continuance of Revelation is likewise to be counted among the miracles of the Quran. The successive revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of verses of such magnificence, defying imitation even if an attempt was to be made by the entirety of humankind with another species of being also called upon to help, can only confirm beyond the shadow of a doubt the Divine source of the Quran, providing one of the clearest proofs of it being impervious to human intervention.

Readily admitted, moreover, is the fact that even a simple volume of poems takes great toil to compile. However, regardless of the degree of care shown, it is impossible to argue that any of these manmade works is free from error. Such concerns are inapplicable to Divine Revelation, forever surviving in its original form, abounding in numerous miracles. That alone suffices to manifest the splendor of the Holy Quran.

Upon the coming of Chapter Muddaththir, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ immediately got up from where he had been laying. Not knowing what had just happened, Khadijah ؓ was surprised:

"Why did you not continue your rest?" she asked.

"Time for resting is over", said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, informing her of the Revelation that had come anew.

During the first few days of the arrival of Revelation, Jibril ؑ taught the Blessed Prophet ﷺ how to make wudu and perform salat. The command to perform a deed of worship which he was fond of had put a smile on his face.

Jubilant, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned home. Telling Khadija ؓ of the great blessing given by Allah ﷻ, he instructed her how to make wudu and offer salat.[137]

The First Muslims

The first person to believe in the Divine Message was the Messenger of Allah himself, ﷺ, which is expressed in the Quran as such:

اٰمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهٖ

137. Ibn Ishaq, p. 117; Ibn Hisham, I, 262-263.

"The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord…" (al-Baqara, 285)

قُلْ اِنِّی اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّینَ.

وَاُمِرْتُ لِاَنْ اَکُونَ اَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِینَ.

"Say: "Verily, I am commanded to serve Allah with sincere devotion,

And I am commanded that I shall be the first of those who submit." (Zumer 11-12)

The next in line to accept Islam after the Prophet ﷺ was his honorable wife Khadijah ؓ. Each time the Noble Prophet would return home dejected and depressed from having to put up with the insults, mockery and ill-treatment of his tribesman, the Almighty would soothe his pain with the kind and consoling words of Khadijah ؓ that served as a Divine relief easing his mission.[138]

Once Khadijah ؓ became a Muslim, their daughters Ruqayya, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah ؓ followed in her footsteps.[139]

Having seen the Prophet ﷺ and Khadijah offer salat together, Ali -may his countenance be ennobled- once asked:

"What are you doing?"

"This is the religion Allah has chosen for Himself. I hereby invite you to believe in the one Allah and worship Him, and reject Lat and Uzza who neither benefit nor harm', said the Prophet ﷺ.

"I have not heard of a religion of this kind until now", replied Ali. "In any case, I cannot accept anything without first consulting my father Abu Talib.'

As the Noble Prophet ﷺ had been calling to Islam only secretly at the time, he said:

"If you will not choose to become a Muslim, Ali, keep this between us, do not expose it."

That night, the Almighty warmed Ali's -may his countenance be ennobled- heart to the light of Islam. He went next to the Prophet ﷺ in the morning to ask more questions. Upon receiving the desired answers, he succumbed to the wish of the Prophet ﷺ and became a Muslim. Being only ten years old at the time and

138. Ibn Hisham , I, 259.
139. Ibn Saad, VIII, 36.

fearing his father, he nonetheless kept his acceptance of Islam secret for some time. (Ibn Ishaq, p. 118; Ibn Saad, III, 21).

Every time the Prophet ﷺ wished to perform salat, with Ali -may his countenance be ennobled- by his side, he would set out to the valleys of Mecca and worship in secret, and would return by sunset. This continued for a while.

It was only a matter of time before Abu Talib found out about the secret prayers of his son and nephew, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ formally invited his beloved uncle to Islam. Abu Talib responded:

"Abandoning the religion of my ancestors, my dear nephew, is not something within my power. But be sure to hold fast onto that with which you have been sent. By Allah, as long as I am alive no harm shall come to you."

And to Ali -may his countenance be ennobled- he said:

"He invites you only to goodness and integrity. Remain firm on his path, son; do not ever leave him!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 265)

During a commercial visit to Mecca, Abdullah ibn Masud رضي الله عنه[140] saw the Prophet ﷺ, Khadijah and Ali رضي الله عنه circumambulate the Kaabah, and noted that Khadijah paid particular attention to covering herself with the hijab. (Zahabi, Siyer, I, 463)

Ufayf al-Kindi also paid a visit to Mecca at the time for trade where he noticed the Prophet ﷺ, Khadijah and Ali perform salat by the Kaabah. Interested, he requested information about them from Abbas رضي الله عنه, who after describing them at length, added:

"By Allah, I know of no other people who believe in this religion apart from those three!"

Even long after having become Muslim, Ufayf رضي الله عنه was later always to express his regret for that day and bemoan:

140. Abdullah ibn Masud رضي الله عنه, also called Abu Abdurrahman, is among the first Muslims. After accepting Islam, he never left the side of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, taking great enjoyment in serving him. Ibn Masud was a thin, delicate man, with a sweet voice and an amiable appearance. Muslims were still very low in number when he entered Islam. The idolaters never ceased harrassing him in Mecca, forcing him to migrate to Medina, where he was sheltered by Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه. He took permanent residence in the town following the Hegira of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, taking active part in all the battles that were to take place thereafter. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to take great pleasure from listening to Ibn Masud recite the Quran. Because of his profound knowledge, Ibn Masud ended up training numerous scholars of tafsir, hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. The scholars of Kufa, in particular, are known to have given jurisprudential verdicts in accordance with his narrations and opinions. He is reputed to have conveyed a total of 848 hadith narrations. After serving as the Judge of Kufa, Ibn Masud returned to Madina during the caliphate of Othman رضي الله عنه, passing away a short time later, aged over sixty years.

"If only I had accepted Islam that day and had become the second male Muslim! How I wish now to have been the fourth among them!' (Ibn Saad, VIII, 18; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, II, 487)

Right after Ali, Zayd ibn Harithah, ﷺ, the freed slave of the Prophet ﷺ, also accepted Islam and offered salat, never leaving the company and service of the Prophet ﷺ thereafter. So sincere was his devotion to the Messenger of Allah that when the vagrants of Ta'if began stoning the Prophet ﷺ, he shielded him with his own body until he was left bloody and bruised, for which he was graced with the personal affection and compliments of the Prophet ﷺ.

In this respect, significant is the following account of Omar ﷺ that testifies to the love the Prophet ﷺ had for Zayd ﷺ.

As Caliph, Omar ﷺ had reserved a salary of 3,500 dirham for Zayd's son Usama, 500 dirham more than the salary of Abdullah, Omar's own son. Abdullah protested.

"Why do you value Usama more than I, when I have been involved in a greater number of battles than him?"

Omar's ﷺ response manifested the richness of his heart and the greatness of his humility, along with his extraordinary esteem for justice.

'Well, son, the Prophet ﷺ liked his father more than he liked yours. He also liked Usama more than he liked you. It is for that reason that I have preferred the fondness of the Prophet ﷺ over mine'. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 39)

As seen in this example, which is just one among numerous others, the Companions always willingly chose those whom the Prophet ﷺ liked over their own.[141]

Abu Bakr ﷺ had already been a friend of the Prophet ﷺ even before Prophethood. Since childhood, he had witnessed the Messenger's perfect morals, loyalty and trustworthiness and was convinced that a person whose unblemished standards prevented him from uttering even the smallest of lies could never lie about the Almighty. Hence, when invited by the Prophet ﷺ to accept Islam, Abu Bakr accepted without hesitation.[142]

In a relevant hadith, the Prophet ﷺ states:

"When Allah sent me as a Prophet to you people, you first said 'You are a liar'. But Abu Bakr said 'He speaks the truth' and then supported me with his life and wealth". (Bukhari, Ashab'u-Nabi, 5)

141. Haythami, VI, 174; Ibn Saad, IV, 30.
142. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 78.

Nothing had made the Prophet ﷺ happier than Abu Bakr's ؓ acceptance of Islam. Once he became a Muslim, he openly proclaimed his faith without hesitation and began inviting others to believe in Allah and his Messenger.[143]

Abu Bakr ؓ holds an exceptionally important place in the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. In this respect, the success of any given cause depends upon three factors:

1. A governing idea.

2. People rallying around that idea.

3. Financial resource.

The governing idea was the content of Islam, confirmed by Revelation. Regarding the other two factors, Abu Bakr ؓ assumed a crucial role. It was with him that the rallying began and his great wealth was put to use in taking care of the various financial needs of the cause, including, among others, the freeing of Muslim slaves.

To further explain these two points, it can be said that the friendship between the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ that spanned across their teenage years, turned into a sublime companionship once the mission of prophethood began.

Already honored for being among the first to accept Islam, Abu Bakr further earned the title *as-Siddiq*, by not allowing even a speck of doubt to sully his faith. True to this spirit, the upcoming years were to stand witness to his amazing material and spiritual devotion in the cause of spreading Islam, when he was to end up devoting his entire wealth in the way of Allah ﷻ.

To love is to overflow with affection for the beloved; it is to be able to love whatever and whoever the beloved loves, to prefer his or her desires over one's own and to able to sacrifice all in the way of the beloved. The life of Abu Bakr ؓ is filled with such supreme instances of a devoted love for and complete self-annihilation in the Prophet ﷺ.

On one occasion, Abu Bakr ؓ became bedridden simply upon hearing the Prophet ﷺ was ill. Such uplifting love resulted in a complete bond between the two friends, so much so that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Abu Bakr is part of me and I am part of him. He is my brother both in this world and in the hereafter". (Daylami, I, 437) This is a confirmation of their companionship in the spiritual world and a mutual reflection of the state of their hearts.

143. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 80-81.

On his deathbed, the Prophet ﷺ further said of the doors leading to his Mosque:

"Close all the doors except that of Abu Bakr!" (Bukhari, Ashabu'n-Nabi, 3) This compliment is one of the finest expressions of the spiritual connection and exceptional closeness between the two.

Also becoming Muslim during the first days of the call of Allah's Messenger ﷺ were Bilal the Abyssinian and his mother ﷺ. Bilal ﷺ was in fact among the first seven to announce their acceptance of Islam. To renounce his faith, he was inflicted with the severest of tortures, which he would endure, reciting 'Ahad! Ahad! Allah is one! Allah is one', each time he was forced to deny his belief.

Paying their ransom, Abu Bakr ﷺ freed both Bilal and his mother,[144] for which not only did he receive the praises of the Prophet ﷺ, he also became an exemplar of compassion and generosity.

Mawlana Rumi قدس سره recounts this instance, using the language of the heart, as follows:

"Upon hearing of the horrendous torture exacted on Bilal Habashi, the Siddiq appeared in the presence of the Noble Prophet and informed him of Bilal's troubles:

'That sacred soul, who clutches the heavens, has fallen in love with you. He is captivated by your affection. Only for this reason do the oppressors harass that angelic man. In spite of his innocence, they pluck his wings. They want to bury that great treasure in the dirt of idolatry and rebellion…

They are laying him on scorching sand under the burning sun; thrashing his naked body with thorny branches…

But despite the fount-like gushing of blood from his flesh, he still says 'Allah is one, Allah is one'; he does not give up prostrating to his Lord…'

Compassion and mercy had virtually turned every bit of Abu Bakr's body into a tongue aching with sorrow and agony, with which he was distressfully and lengthily explaining the torment of Bilal to the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

At last, he unveiled the intention in his heart and uttered, 'I want to ransom him, Messenger of Allah; I am ready to spend all my wealth. I shall not feel at ease in this world until I save that sacred soul who has incurred the wrath and torture of the enemies of Allah only for having loved Allah and having become His slave, and a believer of His messenger'.

144. Ibn Saad, III, 232; Hâkim, III, 319.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ became overly delighted, and responded, 'I too am your partner in this venture…you compassionate friend of Allah and His Messenger!'

Abu Bakr then immediately headed to the house of Bilal's master. Bilal had meanwhile passed out from the pain of torture. Abu Bakr had only bitter words to say to his master, the man deprived of even the least mercy.

'You evil, ruthless soul! How can you torture a friend of Allah? You callous man! With what kind of malice and hatred are you filled?

You merciless beast! Do you think yourself a man? You are a villain deprived of mercy, a disgusting soul clad as a human being!'

Following these words, Abu Bakr quenched the greed of Bilal's master with so much worldly goods that the man was left in awe as he watched Abu Bakr pour out his ransom.

Realizing the amazement of the deprived man, Abu Bakr said, 'You fool! Little are you aware that like a child, you have given me a pearl in return for a walnut. Little do you know that Bilal is worth both worlds. The difference is that you look at the color of his skin, while I look at his soul. If you were to insist on more payment during the deal, I would have surely given more to secure him. Were you to insist on even more, I would have given you all I have, and I would have even gone into debt if need be. You simple fool! Remember that only a jeweler can know the worth of a gem'.

Giving voice to a perfect compassion and mercy, Rumi's قدس سره depiction equally impresses our hearts with the truth that the value of a mature human being is beyond all estimation and that worldly riches amount to nothing in comparison to the spiritual fiber of a human being.

With this humane deed, Abu Bakr ﷺ had once more proven the great love he had for the Prophet ﷺ. Further signs of his boundless love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ could be summed up as follows:

- Acting in line with the Quran and principles of Islam brought by the Prophet ﷺ, lovingly with all his heart.

- Showing compassion to fellow Muslims and persevering in matters to their benefit.

- Not valuing the world and being willingly prepared for poverty if need be.

- Longing to unite with Him.

- Frequently remembering Him.

The guidance of Khalid ibn Said ﷺ on the other hand came through a disturbing dream. One night he saw himself on the edge of a huge pit of fire with his father trying to push him down, just when the Prophet ﷺ seized him by the waist, saving him from plunging into the flames. When he woke in fear, he said to himself, 'This must surely be a message!' Afterwards, through the advice of Abu Bakr ﷺ, he went to the Prophet as and accepted Islam.

After hearing about his son's change of faith, Khalid's father persecuted him, telling him to, "Go away! You shall no more receive any food from me!"

"Withhold as long as you may…surely Allah will give me my food", Khalid replied resolutely.

Khalid ﷺ remained by the Prophet's ﷺ side until the Abyssinian migration. (Hakim, III, 277-280)

Becoming Muslim later were also Khalid's wife Umayna, his brother Amr and Amr's wife Fatima ﷺ. With the encouragement and guidance of Abu Bakr ﷺ, the days of secret calling also saw Abu Fuqayha, Othman, Zubayr ibn Awwam, Abdurrahman ibn Awf, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and Talha ibn Ubaydullah ﷺ taste the delight of Islam.[145]

Othman ﷺ once told the following to the Prophet ﷺ.

"While in Damascus lying half asleep, Messenger of Allah, we suddenly heard a voice, saying 'Sleepers, wake up! Ahmed has appeared in Mecca!' Once we returned to Mecca, we found out about your prophethood." (Ibn Saad, III, 255)

Talha ibn Ubaydullah ﷺ recounts the following:

"I was at the Busra Fair when I heard a priest asking for people from Mecca. I approached him and told him I was from there.

'Has Ahmed appeared?' the priest then asked.

'Which Ahmed?' I replied.

'Ahmed ibn Abdullah ibn Abdulmuttalib! The last Prophet set to appear in Mecca. He shall then leave Mecca and migrate to an arid, stony place with date orchards. I advise you to pursue him!' the priest said.

The priest's words had made a way into my heart. Immediately leaving the fair, I returned to Mecca.

'Are there any news of late?' I asked.

145. Ibn Hisham , I, 268.

'Yes', they replied. 'Muhammad the Trustworthy, son of Abdullah, claims to be a prophet. Abu Bakr too has followed him'". (Ibn Saad, III, 215)

Others graced with the blessing of being the first Muslims include Abu Ubayda ibn Jarrah, Abu Salama, Arqam ibn Abi Arqam, Othman ibn Mazun, Asma bint Abu Bakr, Khabbab ibn Arat, Abdullah ibn Masud, Abdullah ibn Jahsh, Jafar ibn Abu Talib, his wife Asma bint Umays, Abu Huzayfa and Amir ibn Fuhayra ﷺ.

The House of Arqam: The Center of Education for the First Muslims

For the first three years, the Prophet ﷺ called people to Islam secretly, asking those who declined the offer not to disclose the matter to anyone. The house of Arqam ibn Abi Arqam ﷺ served as a secret meeting place for the Companions, after he became Muslim during the first year of Prophethood.

The House of Arqam, also known as the House of Islam, was situated by the Hill of Safa in Mecca. Here in this sacred house, the Prophet ﷺ would take refuge to explain Islam, recite and teach the Quran to those who would come, away from Meccan idolaters. There, they would offer salat in congregation. It was here that many became acquainted with Islam. Until Omar's ﷺ acceptance of Islam in the sixth year of prophethood, the house lent tremendous service in the way of teaching and calling others to Islam. Arqam ﷺ was to later donate the house as a trust. The deed of trust is as follows:

"In the Name of Allah, the most Merciful and most Compassionate…This is Arqam's will regarding his house at Safa just ahead, the land of which has been deemed as part of the Sacred House, and has therefore also became sacred and inviolable. It cannot be sold or bequeathed. To this, Hisham ibn As and his slave bear witness'. (Ibn Saad, III, 242-244; Hakim, III, 574-575/6129)

The House of Arqam has today been demolished by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and incorporated into the land of the Sacred House, the Kaabah, and has thus returned to its origin.

The Prophet ﷺ spent the first three years of prophethood calling to Islam in secret. This was not from fear of incurring torment and hardship but was rather for the benefit of Islam. Besides the fact that there had not yet been revealed a Divine command for open calling, had Islam been proclaimed openly during that period, many new Muslims, most of whom were poor and weak, would have fallen into danger, and their perishing could have put an end to the religion even before it began.

From the experience of the House of Arqam, we can draw the following lessons with regard to the method of Islam.

1. When needed, covertness must be essential to a mission.

2. Education is the necessary first step in the realization of any given social, religious and political aim. To acquire quality, individuals must be conversant with the logic and morals of the mission.

The course to be taken and the method to be followed in Islamic activities till the Day of Judgment must be observed in the light of the model of the Prophet ﷺ. Any effort toward revitalizing Islam and taking it to places it has not yet been must take into essential consideration these educational blueprints.

THE FOURTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

Declare What You Have Been Commanded!
Warn Your Nearest Relations!

After the three year period of secrecy, in the fourth year of prophethood, the Almighty revealed:

فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَاَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ. اِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِنَ.

"So declare openly what you are commanded and turn aside from the idolaters.

Surely, We will suffice you against the scoffers". (al-Hijr, 94-95)

These *ayah* were commanding the open declaration of Islam. Another emphasizes the same point with greater clarity, with a tone of warning.

يَا اَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَاِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ
رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message. Allah will protect you from people. Surely He will not guide the unbelieving." (al-Maida, 67)

From then on, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, was ordered to:

قُلْ يَا اَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنِّى رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِى لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوَاتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِ وَيُمِيتُ فَاٰمِنُوا بِاللّٰهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْاُمِّيِّ الَّذِى يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

"Say: O people! Surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him to Whom belongs the kingdom of heavens and earth. There is no God but He, He gives life and death. So believe in Allah and His messenger, the unlettered Prophet who believes in Allah and His words; and follow him so that you may walk in the right way." (al-Araf, 158)

But while thinking how and where he was to begin, the Prophet ﷺ was aided by another Revelation:

وَاَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِينَ. وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. فَاِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ اِنّى بَرِىٓءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ.
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ. اَلَّذِى يَرٰيكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ.

"And warn your nearest relations; and be kind to him of the believers who follows you. But if they disobey you, then say: Surely I am clear of what you do. And rely on the Mighty, the Merciful, who sees you when you stand." (as-Shuara 214-218)

Once the Prophet ﷺ began the calling to Islam openly, he first invited his close relatives, compliant with the Divine order. Treating them with honor and respect, he then addressed them in the following:

"I have been sent as Prophet first to you, sons of Abdulmuttalib, then to all of mankind. You have already borne witness to many miracles through me. Now, who among you will follow me as a brother and friend?"

Nobody took much notice. They remained silent. But Ali ﷺ, who was still a child at the time but had the honor of being the first male to join faith, stood and said:

"I will be sure to help you, Messenger of Allah!"

As those who were present looked on belittlingly and mockingly, the Prophet ﷺ turned his warm gaze towards Ali ﷺ and caressed his head with the gentle hand that so many would have given all to kiss just once.[146]

The unwillingness of his relatives to accept Islam did little to break the perseverance of the Prophet ﷺ. After all, Allah the Almighty had revealed:

يٰسٓ. وَالْقُرْاٰنِ الْحَكِيمِ. اِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ. عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

"Ya Seen. By the wise Qur'an. Most surely you are one of the messengers. On a straight path…" (Ya-Seen, 1-4)

وَاَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيدًا

"…and We have sent you to mankind as a messenger; and Allah is sufficient as a witness!" (an-Nisa, 79)

146. Ahmed, I, 111, 159; Haythami , VIII, 302-303.

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَاكَ اِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"And We have not sent you but to all of mankind as a bearer of good news and as a warner, but most men do not know." (as-Saba, 28)

قُلْ يَآ اَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنِّى رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ
جَمِيعًا الَّذِى لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالْاَرْضِ

"Say: O people! Surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth…" (al-Araf, 158)

As made clear by the Quran, different from those before him, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent to all humankind. This is explicated by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself in the following hadith:

"I have been given five things which were not given to any one else before me.

1. Allah made me victorious by awe, by His frightening my enemies from a distance of one month's journey.

2. The earth has been made, for me and for my followers, a place for praying and purity through *tayammum*, hence anyone of my followers can perform salat wherever and whenever the time is due.

3. Spoils have been made permissible for me even though it was not lawful before for anyone else.

4. I have been given the right of intercession on the Day of Judgment.

5. While every prophet was sent to his nation only, I have been sent to all mankind." (Bukhari, Tayammum, 1)[147]

Except for Ali ﷺ, who was only a child at the time, the Prophet's ﷺ first open calling of his relatives fell virtually on deaf ears.

Afterwards, the Prophet ﷺ once again invited his relatives to his house. Treating them again with respect and honor, he then addressed them:

"Sons of Abdulmuttalib! By Allah, I know of no other man among the Arabs who has brought a thing of greater benefit, for your world and your hereafter, than I.

147. In another narration, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ further emphasizes three more points: "*I have been made jawami'ul-kalim (*i.e. endowed with the ability to express the greatest meanings through the least amount of words*). Prophethood has come to an end with me, sealed, and there shall come no more prophets after me. And as I was lying asleep, the keys of the treasures of earth were brought and placed in front of me.*" (Muslim, Masajid, 5, 6)

Sons of Abdulmuttalib! I have been sent as a prophet to you in particular, to all mankind in general. And you have indeed already seen some of the miracles in this regard. Now who is willing to lend me brotherly help in this duty in return for paradise? Who is willing to follow me in this path as a brother and friend?"

Again, not only did any of his relatives not accept the invitation of the Prophet ﷺ, they all mocked and laughed at the offer. Soon after they all disbanded. (Ahmed, I, 159; Ibn Saad, I, 187; Haythami, VIII, 302; Ibn Asir, *el-Kâmil*, II, 63; Balazurî, I, 119; Halabbi, I, 283)

Close relatives are more apt to accept what a person has to say in comparison to those who are more distant. Considering also the relatives of those who accept Islam, it is evident that the Religion through this way carries the potential of being carried to society at a greater speed. It is even more difficult for others to show acceptance if the relatives do not believe in and accept the words of the caller. It was for that reason that the Prophet ﷺ followed the Divine command and initiated the process with his relatives.

On the other hand, for prophets to be successful in their duty of invitation, the support and assistance of close relatives has always been crucial. This has in fact been explained in the Quran with reference to past examples:

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرٰيكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا
وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ

"They said: O Shu'aib! We do not understand much of what you say and most surely we see you to be weak among us, and were it not for your family we would surely stone you!" (Hud, 91)

When Lut عليه السلام was left helpless in the face of his people's deviance, he bemoaned in sorrow the lack of help at his side:

قَالَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِی بِكُمْ قُوَّةً اَوْ اٰوِی اِلٰی رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ

"He said: If only I had strength to resist you or had some strong support!" (Hud, 80)

Islam has placed particular emphasis on looking out for relatives. Therefore, if a person wishes for the guidance of others through Islam, he ought to first think of his own family and relatives. Allah the Almighty says in this respect:

وَاُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلٰی بِبَعْضٍ فِی
كِتَابِ اللّٰهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ

"Blood relations are more deserving of one another in the Decree of Allah." (al-Ahzab, 6)

The Prophet's Invitation of Quraysh to Islam on the Hill of Safa

Commanded to begin the invitation to Islam with his relatives, the Prophet ﷺ, the Light of Being, ascended the Hill of Safa to address the tribe of Quraysh, who had flocked to the Hill. Standing on a high rock, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said the following words aloud:

"If I were to tell you, Quraysh, of enemy horsemen hiding in the outskirts of this mountain, in that valley, ready to attack you and seize your properties, would you believe me?"

Without a second thought they replied:

"Yes, we would as until now we have always found you dependable and have never heard you say a lie!"[148]

Hearing this confirmation from all those present without exception, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ went ahead to inform them of the Divine Truth:

"Then be assured that I inform you of an approaching and severe torment that will befall those who disbelieve in Allah, against which I have been sent to warn you.

With respect to you, Quraysh, I am like a man who sees the enemy and fearing they may harm his family, rushes to warn them.

Quraysh! You shall die just the way you fall asleep, and you will be resurrected just the way you are awakened. There is no doubt that you will rise from your graves and be brought to the presence of Allah to give an account of all that you did in this world. You shall consequently reap the rewards of your good deeds and face a severe punishment for your bad deeds." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 26; Muslim, Iman, 348-355; Ahmed, I, 281-307; Ibn Saad, I, 74, 200; Balazuri, I, 119; Samira az-Zayid, I, 357-359)

148. Here, prior to communicating the Call, we see the Blessed Prophet ﷺ demand a confirmation of his own character. Indeed, it is a person's character that human beings are first attracted to, motivating them to obey. It is similarly imperative for those communicating Islam today to have the truthfulness of their characters confirmed, to be endowed trustworthiness and honesty, like the *al-Amin* and *as-Sadiq* the Noble Messenger ﷺ was. Habib'un-Najjar, the running man mentioned in Chapter Yasin, uses the following words to confirm the dependability of the righteous persons inviting his people to the Truth: اِتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْئَلُكُمْ اَجْراً وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ "Follow those who ask of you no fee and who are rightly guided!" (Yasin, 21). The *ayah* places equal weight on the need for the invitation to be carried out strictly for the pleasure of the Almighty alone and, first and foremost, for the inviters to be on the path of guidance themselves.

There was no overall reaction to the words of the Prophet ﷺ, except for his uncle Abu Lahab who rudely interrupted:

"May your hands dry up! Is this what you called us here for?" He unashamedly continued making inappropriate remarks, breaking the heart of the Prophet ﷺ with vile insults.

The behavior of Abu Lahab brought about the revelation of the chapter al-Masad:

تَبَّتْ يَدَآ اَبِى لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ. مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ. سَيَصْلٰى
نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ. وَامْرَاَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ. فِى جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِنْ مَسَدٍ.

"Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of Blazing Flame! His wife shall carry the crackling wood - As fuel! With a twisted rope of palm-leaf fiber round her neck!" (al-Masad, 1-5; Bukhari, Tafsir 26/2, 34/2, 111/1-2; Muslim, Iman 355)

The *ayah* also make mention of Abu Lahab's wife because, like her husband, she caused much agony for the Prophet ﷺ, to the point of even laying thorns in his path. The chapter additionally implies that neither racial nor genealogical closeness hold absolute value. What is important is spiritual nearness. Spirit recognizes no race. Race is only a quality of the flesh and the flesh is set to perish in soil. A person's value is determined by spiritual maturity; that is his noble attribute. The flesh, which is the material aspect of man, is like a mould which the spirit enters, a dress which it wears. Wearing clothes of different fabrics does not increase the value of man.

As a result of the endeavors of the Prophet ﷺ, his aunts Safiyya and Atiqa, the freed slave of his uncle Abbas Abu Rafi, as well as Abu Dharr and Amr ibn Abasa ﷺ all accepted Islam.

Abu Zarr ﷺ had never worshipped idols, even during the days of ignorance. He explains his own experience of entering the true path as follows:

"I was from the tribe of Ghifar. Just when I received the news that a person had emerged in Mecca claiming to be a prophet, Allah cast the love of Islam into my heart. I told my brother Unays:

"Go to Mecca and speak to the man who says he receives news from the heavens, and return with the information!"

Unays headed to Mecca. After meeting with the Prophet ﷺ and listening to what he had to say, he came back.

'What did you do? What news have you brought?' I asked him.

'I encountered a man in Mecca, of the same faith as you, who says he has been sent by the Almighty', he replied.

'What does the public say about him?'

'Poet, sorcerer, magician and the like!'

A poet himself, my brother was well versed in poetry. He continued:

'I am well aware of the words of sorcerers. His words do not sound like those of a poet in the least. I compared his words to poems of all kinds. But I swear, nobody in their right minds would call that poetry. He certainly speaks the truth. Those who slander him are liars! He only enjoins the good and acts of virtue and forbids the bad and acts of evil'.

I was still undecided. I grabbed my leather bottle and some food and quickly hit the road. I came to Mecca. Not only did I not know the Prophet ﷺ, I was also reluctant to speak to anyone else. I waited by the Kaabah, drinking some Zamzam to quench my thirst. In the meantime, Ali ؓ came next to me:

'It looks like you're a foreigner', he said.

'Yes', I replied.

'Then be our guest!' he offered.

I went with Ali ؓ. Because of the climate of terror caused by the Meccans, he did not even enquire of the purpose of my arrival. The next morning, I again went to the Kaabah in hope of finding the Prophet ﷺ. But again despite waiting until night, I could not find him. Once more Ali ؓ came and asked:

'Have you still not found out where you want to go?'

'No', I responded.

'Then come, be our guest again', he again said.

When we arrived at his house, he finally took the opportunity to ask me.

'So what is your story? Why have you come?'

After making him promise to keep it a secret and to help me, I said:

'According to what we have heard, there is supposed to be someone here who says he is a Prophet. I have come to talk to him.'

'You have done very well to come. That man is the Messenger of Allah; he is truly a Prophet', he asserted and gave me the following instructions: 'Follow me in the morning, into a house which I will enter! But if I sense a danger for you, I will face the wall and look as if I am mending my shoes, and you will pass me by!'

We finally arrived at the presence of the Prophet ﷺ.

'as-Salamu alayka ya Rasulallah,' I said, greeting him for the first time in the manner of Islam.

'To what do you invite people, Muhammad?' I then asked.

'To Allah, who is One and who has no partners, to shun idols and to bear witness that I am the Messenger of Allah', he replied.

After he explained Islam to me, I immediately became a Muslim. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was overly happy, and smiled joyfully.

'Now, Abu Dharr, keep this secret from the Meccans and return to your hometown', he said.

'But I wish to declare my faith, the Messenger of Allah!' I stated.

'I fear that the Meccans may harm you', he said.

'Even if it means they will kill me, I will surely do it', I replied.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained silent.

Just as the men of Quraysh had assembled by the Kaabah, I said at the top of my voice:

'Quraysh! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger!'

'The man must be mad! Let's show this Sabiite[149] a lesson,' the idolaters shouted and they began beating me until I lay halfdead. At that point Abbas, the Prophet's ﷺ uncle, arrived and shielded me with his own body, and shouted:

'Shame on you! Do you forget you are traders whose route lies on the way of the tribe of Ghifar? Do you want your route cut off?'

Only then did they leave me.

When I arrived at the Kaabah the next morning, the same thing happened all over again. They left me for dead. I got up and went next to the Prophet ﷺ. Seeing my state, he said:

'Had I not forbidden you?'

'This was my heart's wish, Messenger of Allah, and I fulfilled it', I replied.

I stayed awhile next to the Prophet ﷺ. Afterwards I asked:

149. Meccans would occasionally refer to Muslims as 'Sabiites', meaning those who have deserted their religion of old.

'What do you command I do?'

The Prophet ﷺ said:

'When you receive my order, preach Islam to your tribe. And when you receive the news of our coming out into the open, come to me!' (Bukhari, Manaqibu'l-Ansar 33, Manaqib 10; Ahmad, V, 174; Hakim, III, 382-385; Ibn Saad, IV, 220-225)

Meanwhile, the Prophet ﷺ continued inviting people to Islam. During the months of pilgrimage, he would always roam the fairs of Uqaz, Majanna and Zhul-Majaz, communicating Islam to whomever he came across, whether they were free or slave, weak or strong, rich or poor and he would invite them to belief in the unity of Allah ﷻ.[150]

Ayah revealed during this phase of prophethood generally warn of the Day of Judgment:

اِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ. مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ. يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَآءُ
مَوْرًا. وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا. فَوَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ.
اَلَّذِينَ هُمْ فِى خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ. يَوْمَ يُدَعُّونَ اِلٰى نَارِ
جَهَنَّمَ دَعًّا. هٰذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِى كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ.

"Most surely the punishment of your Lord will come to pass. On the day when the heaven shall move from side to side and the mountains will fly hither and thither. So woe on that day to those who reject the truth; to those who play and paddle in vain discourses! The day on which they shall violently be driven away to the fire of hell, when it will be said 'This is the fire which you used to deny!'" (at-Tur, 7-14)

Once the Noble Messenger ﷺ proclaimed his prophethood and openly began inviting people to Islam, a condemnation of the idolaters and their idols followed:

اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ اَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَارِدُونَ

"Surely you and what you worship besides Allah are the firewood of hell; to it you shall come." (al-Anbiya, 98)

150. See Ibn Saad, I, 216-217.

قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحٰٓى اِلَىَّ اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ
وَاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيمُوٓا اِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ وَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is One God, therefore follow the right way to Him and ask His forgiveness; and woe to the idolaters." (Fussilat, 6)

When the Messenger of Allah began denouncing the idols the Meccans were worshipping, and telling them that their ancestors who had died as idolaters were destined for hellfire, he was rejected by the idolaters of Quraysh, who then united in enmity and hatred towards him. But as Abu Talib had the Prophet ﷺ under his protection, they could not do anything.[151]

Ingrained idolaters like Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, Walid ibn Mughira, Umayya ibn Khalef, As ibn Wail, Nadr ibn Harith, Uqba ibn Abi Muayt and Utbah ibn Rabia were among the miserable who went too far in their hostilities against the Prophet ﷺ and thus wrought with their own hands their eternal torment.

The Importance and Method of Invitation

Invitation in this sense, or *tabligh*, is the attempt to summon people to live by the principles of Islam, by virtue of explaining them. To use a more famous definition, it is to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. In the Quran, the Almighty imposes tabligh as a duty for all Muslims:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ اُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ اِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَاْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

"And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and it is these that shall be successful." (Al-i Imran, 104)

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ اُمَّةٍ اُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَاْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

"You are the best of the nations raised up for the benefit of men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong…" (Al-i Imran, 110)

The importance of *tabligh* is also underlined by the Prophet ﷺ in the following hadith:

151. Ibn Saad, I, 199.

"May Allah grace him who hears a word from us and communicates it exactly to others. Many a person, who receives a word, understands and applies it better than the actual speaker." (Tirmidhi, Ilm, 7)

"By Allah, for a single person to receive guidance from Allah through you, is better for you than to own a valley full of red camels." (i.e. the best of worldly goods) (Bukhari, Ashabu'n-Nabi, 9)

"The reward of an inviter is as much as that of those who follow him, without reducing theirs in any way." (Muslim, Ilm, 16)

Anas ﷺ, a companion of the Prophet ﷺ, narrates the following hadith about the high ranks awaiting the inviters to Islam in the Hereafter:

"One day, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained:

'Should I inform you of certain people? They are neither prophets nor martyrs; yet prophets and martyrs will gaze at their ranks with envy on the Day of Judgment.[152] They will be seated on pulpits of light, recognized by everyone.'

'Who are they, the Messenger of Allah?' the Companions asked.

The Prophet ﷺ answered:

'They are those who endear people to Allah and endear Allah to people. They roam the Earth as advisors and inviters.'

Then I asked:

'We understand how Allah may be endeared to his servants, Messenger of Allah, but how are his slaves to be endeared to Allah?'

'They enjoin the things Allah likes and caution against the things He dislikes. And once people obey, Allah likes them", he explained. (Ali al-Muttaqi, III, 685-686; Bayhaqi, Shuabu'l-Iman, I, 367)

While the gain of a person who duly carries out the duty of invitation is greater than the world's richest treasures, the neglect of this duty carries consequences so grave that they could steer society to destruction.

The Blessed Prophet's ﷺ related warning merits attention:

"I swear by Allah who has given me life that, either you will enjoin the good and forbid the wrong, or else Allah will send such a punishment upon you that your prayers for relief will no longer be of benefit." (Tirmidhi, Fitan, 9)

152. Indicated by the expression is the value of those occupied with inviting others to Truth. It does not imply they have a greater worth than prophets and martyrs, for both are persons who have sacrificed their lives on the way of Truth. Their fondness of the deeds of those engaged with *tabligh* and their related joy, stems from their insight into the sacredness of the duty itself.

Abza al-Huzai ﷺ narrates the following:

"One day, the Messenger of Allah ascended the pulpit to give a sermon. After speaking highly of certain groups of Muslims, he added, 'What is the matter with some people that they do not explain matters to their neighbors, teach them what they do not know and increase understanding? Why is it that they do not enjoin the good and warn against the wrong? And what is wrong with others who do not seek to learn what they do not know from their neighbors and try to increase their understanding? 'I swear it by Allah! Either the knowledgeable shall teach their neighbors and make them people of greater understanding, enjoin the good and forbid the wrong; and either those who do not know shall ask and learn from their neighbors and try to grasp matters of Religion, or I shall punish them both, here in this world.'

After the speech, the Prophet ﷺ descended the pulpit and returned home. Some remarked:

'It could be that the Prophet ﷺ meant the Asharis of Yemen, as they possess understanding, while their neighbors are vulgar, hard-tempered nomads who live by oases.'

Once the Asharis were made aware of the situation, they went to the Prophet ﷺ and asked:

'It seems that you spoke highly of certain people, Messenger of Allah, and badly of us. What is it about us that you spoke that way?'

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept silent, only repeating what he had said before. The Asharis were still uncertain whether they were the people in question. To completely make sense of the matter, they repeated the same question a few more times. But each time the Prophet ﷺ gave the same reply. Thereupon, the Asharis said:

'Then give us one year, Messenger of Allah!'

So the Messenger of Allah allowed them a year to educate their neighbors and teach them matters of Religion, reciting the following *ayah*:

لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِى اِسْرَآئِلَ عَلٰى لِسَانِ دَاوٗدَ
وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ. كَانُوا لَا
يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ.

'Cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary, are those who disbelieved from among the children of Israel; this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. They used not to forbid each other the hateful things which they did; certainly evil was that which they did.' (al-Maida, 78-79) (Haythami, I, 164; Ali al-Muttaqi, III, 684/8457)

With the spiritual strength and maturity he was graced with by the Almighty, the Light of Being ﷺ continued preaching Islam with the desire to guide humanity entire, whereby the consciousness of fulfilling the Divine duty entrusted in him raised him to the highest level. He rejected all worldly offers that would stand in the way of carrying out his duty, valuing servanthood to the Creator above anything else.

The Prophet ﷺ always explained Islam according to people's level of comprehension, to the extent of their understanding. The guidance of even a single person would give him joy beyond description. Even during an event of great magnitude like the capture of Khaybar, he took delight from lengthily explaining Islam to a slave, which ultimately led to the slave's guidance. (Ibn Hisham, III, 398)

Again, during the harsh ten-day mission in Ta'if, the Prophet ﷺ led Addas, a Christian slave, to his guidance, which made him forget all the misfortunes at Ta'if.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave his all in the way of shedding the light of Islam upon the whole of humanity, and never felt tired or fed up with the duty of invitation. Abu Rifaa ﷺ gives detail of an account that shows the Prophet's ﷺ sensitivity regarding the duty of inviting:

"While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was giving a sermon, I approached him and said, 'There is a poor man, Messenger of Allah, who says he wants to learn this Religion.'

The Prophet ﷺ turned and looked at me. Cutting the sermon short, he then came next to me. They immediately brought him a steel legged stool on which he sat and explained me a few things he had been taught by the Almighty. He then returned and completed his sermon.'" (Muslim, Juma, 60)

The Companions were also very sensitive in communicating the truth and fixing the errors they saw. The duty of alerting those who acted against the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ was not just reserved to a few selected persons among them. Given the right time and the right place they would do what they had to do. They would express the truth regardless of its consequences as they could not tolerate anything in opposition to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. They would have nothing to do with those who had a habit of objecting to the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, saying they could

never live under the same roof.[153] To those who forwarded their own opinions in opposition to the hadiths they would say they could no longer remain with them in the same environment, immediately after which they would leave.[154]

Sufyan as-Sawri says the following on the importance of tabligh:

"It is better for you to go to Khorasan to preach Islam, than to live in Mecca."

For a task as important as inviting people to Islam, the rearing of persons who can properly carry it out becomes equally important. The incident below clearly expresses the value of a spiritually well-trained inviter.

"Omar ﷺ was one day sitting with his friends. He asked them to make some wishes from Allah. Some wished:

'…for a houseful of coins to spend in the cause of Allah!'

Another few wished:

'…for a houseful of gold so to spend in the cause of Allah!'

Yet some other Companions wished:

'…for a houseful of jewelry to use in the way of Allah!'

'Ask for more, more!' Omar insisted.

'What more from Allah could we ask for?' they inquired.

Thereupon Omar ﷺ said, 'I would wish for this house to be filled with people of exceptional maturity of the likes of Abu Ubayda ibn Jarrah, Muaz ibn Jabal, Huzayfa'tul-Yaman, so I can employ them in ensuring obedience to Allah, in the service of enjoining good and forbidding evil…" (Bukhari, Tarikh'us-Saghir, I, 54)

The Almighty, the absolute source of mercy and compassion, explains the most effective style to follow in calling His servants to the true path:

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِى هِىَ اَحْسَنُ

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and have disputations with them in the best manner…" (an-Nahl, 125)

153. See Shafiî, *Risâla*, p. 193, İstanbul, 1985; Suyutî, *Miftâh*, p. 48, Beirut 1987.
154. See Muwatta', Buyu', 33; Ibn Mâjah, Muqaddima, 2.

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوٓا اَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِى هِىَ اَحْسَنُ اِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوٓا اٰمَنَّا بِالَّذِٓى اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَاُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ وَاِلٰهُنَا وَاِلٰهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

"And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best, except those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him do we submit." (al-Ankabut, 46)

وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ اِنَّنِى مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ. وَلَا تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِى هِىَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِى بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ.

"And who speaks better than he who calls to Allah while he himself does good, and says: I am surely one of those who submit? And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best[155]; he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend." (Fussilat 33-34)

قُلْ هٰذِهِ سَبِيلِى اَدْعُوا اِلَى اللهِ عَلٰى بَصِيرَةٍ اَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِى وَسُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me being certain, and glory be to Allah, and I am not one of the idolaters." (Yusuf, 108)

Throughout history, the appliance of the recommended Divine style of invitation has turned many thorny souls into roses, and the darkness of many hearts into light. Even when sending Musa and Harun عليهما السلام to a transgressor and deviant of the caliber of the Pharaoh, Allah ﷻ, still advised them to be gentle:

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ اَوْ يَخْشٰى

"…Then speak to him a gently, that perhaps he may mind or fear." (Ta-ha, 44)

155. A beautiful illustration of this *ayah* is provided by Yusuf عليه السلام, who, instead of holding the misdemeanors of his brothers against them, continued treating them with the same respect and honor as before. The brethren eventually identified him, and pronounced, تَاللهِ لَقَدْ اٰثَرَكَ اللهُ عَلَيْنَا "By Allah, He has certainly preferred you over us", confessing Yusuf's superiority over them, requesting to be pardoned. The incident is a clear case in point attesting to the effectiveness of calling to the right path foremost through conduct. For a detailed account see, Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ, *Nebîler Silsilesi 2,* p. 129-130, İstanbul, 2004.

We can see in the above verse the two fundamentals of the method of invitation:

1. When communicating the truth, one must use a gentle manner without provoking the person.

Even though the Pharaoh himself had in fact leaned towards believing on many occasions after having witnessed the numerous miracles of Musa ﷺ, he was prevented by his vizier Haman and his circle. Losing to arrogance and conceit, he chose not to believe.

By advising Musa ﷺ to adopt a gentle approach, the Almighty also teaches us a method of invitation. Before the actual invitation takes place, hearts are to be softened.[156] Quarrel has no place in the lives of prophets and saints; letting actions do the preaching is what is important.

As all prophets given by the Almighty the duty of invitation came to mend hearts, they always looked at others from the window of the heart and thus enabled the guidance of many by continuously spreading love and mercy in their surroundings. To do otherwise would have produced a gulf that would have completely severed ties with others and the chance of communicating the Truth to them would have been forever lost. And this would have been at odds with Divine Will, as Allah ﷻ, wishes His servants be saved from the swamp they are in. For this reason, the Almighty has sent thousands of prophets throughout history, commanding them to purify hearts with the most beautiful of approaches. Again in line with the same aim, saints who have been blessed among mankind have continued this prophetic manner in the spiritual training of others.

No benefit can be expected from services offered with a harsh and offensive manner which can in no way be reconciled with good morals. This is all the more important in activities that directly address the person's soul, such as education, invitation and offering guidance. In the Prophet's ﷺ person, the *ayah* below addresses the entire Muslims:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللّٰهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ
فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

156. During the 7th year of Hegira, in the wake of the Capture of Khaybar, the Noble Prophet ﷺ aided the depleted Meccans, who were battling fierce famine and scarcity, with supplies of gold, barley and date seeds. Accepting the aid, Abu Sufyan distributed it among the Meccan needy, exclaiming at the same time appreciatively, "May Allah reward our Cousin for looking out for his relatives…" (Yaqubi, II, 56) Their hearts growing tender through such acts of magnanimity, the Meccans soon found themselves wholeheartedly and unreservedly accepting Islam.

"Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you." (Al-i Imran, 159)

2. To extend the invitation to all of humanity, regardless of their status.

A brutal and miserable man who could not lend himself to believe, the Pharaoh was at the same time a ruthless murderer who had slain thousands of innocent babies just to kill Musa, ﷺ. But he still became subject to Divine invitation.

Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ invited Abu Jahl to Islam on numerous occasions. While accepting in his conscience the clear truth of the words of the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Jahl could not admit to it, defeated by his ego and conceit. But the noble manner of the Messenger of Allah led to the guidance of many who were enemies of Islam to begin with, like Omar ibn Khattab, Abu Sufyan, Hind and Wahshi.

Both in Islamic activities and all social relations in general, this approach engenders elegance, kindness and sensitivity to people's special circumstances and physical conditions. This is the exact approach seen in its most inspirational form in the behavior of sufis.

When we look into the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ twenty-three year period of invitation, we come across the following six factors that shed light on the path of an aspiring inviter.

1. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ began the invitation with his closest relatives. After all, the Almighty had revealed:

وَاَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِينَ

"…And warn your nearest relations." (as-Shuara, 214)

يَآ اَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا قُوٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللّٰهَ مَآ اَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

"O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded." (at-Tahrim, 6)

2. In inviting to Islam, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ observed gradualness, following an ease path that gradually increased in difficulty.

The Almighty's first command was: اِقْرَأْ "Read!" (al-Alaq, 1)

Then Muhammad ﷺ was given the duty of rophethood, whereupon he was ordered to: قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ "Get up and warn!" (al-Muddaththir, 2)

After that came the Divine command:

وَاَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِينَ

"…And warn your nearest relations." (as-Shuara, 214)

Afterward the borders of the duty were expanded as to include the entire town:

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى حَتّٰى يَبْعَثَ فِى اُمِّهَا رَسُولًا
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيَاتِنَا وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِى الْقُرٰٓى اِلَّا وَاَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ

"And your Lord never destroyed the towns until He raised in their main town a messenger, reciting to them Our communications, and We never destroyed the towns except when their people were unjust." (al-Qasas, 59)

The next step was the further extension of the invitation as to include neighboring regions:

وَهَـٰذَا كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُّصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَلِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا

"And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed, verifying that which is before it, and that you may warn the Mother of Towns and those around her; and those who believe in the hereafter believe in it, and they attend to their prayers constantly." (al-Anaam, 92)

Finally, it was proclaimed that the boundaries of the invitation were as vast as those of humanity:

وَمَا اَرْسَلْنَاكَ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ

"And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds." (al-Anbiya, 107)

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَاكَ اِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"And We have not sent you but to all people as a bearer of good news and as a warner, but most do not know." (Sab'a, 28)

We see that the Noble Prophet ﷺ also followed the same principle of gradualness in passing on certain regulations. Many instances including the commanding of salat and fasting, and the prohibition of alcohol and usury provide fitting examples.

The Light of Being ﷺ who brought his companions to a perfect level of servanthood, did not bring this about through a sudden change, but rather through a slow, gradual and subtle development. This can be clearly seen for instance in the Prophet's ﷺ advice to Muadh ibn Jabal ؓ before sending him to Yemen:

"You are about to reach a community of the people of the Book. The very first thing to which you should call them is that there is no god but Allah, may His Glory be Magnificent, and that I am His messenger. If they accept, then instruct them that He has enjoined five salats on them during the day and the night. If they accept and obey, then instruct them that Allah has made alms obligatory for them, to be collected their wealthy and distributed to the needy. And if they accept that too, then avoid selecting the best items of their riches. Do not attract the ill wishes of the oppressed, as there stands no curtain between their prayers and Allah." (Bukhari, Zakat 41-63; Muslim, Iman 29-31)

3. To invite or educate, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ always looked out for a suitable opportunity in terms of time, place and the person's state of mind.

Ibn Masud ؓ, used to preach on Thursdays. A person once said to him, "If only you addressed us every day!"

"I do not preach everyday from the fear of boring you", Ibn Masud ؓ replied. "Even the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to watch out for the times we were eager to listen, so that we would not get bored." (Bukhari, Ilm, 11, 12)

During the conquest of Mecca, Abbas ؓ brought Abu Sufyan, who had agreed to become Muslim, and said to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, "Abu Sufyan is a person who loves to be complimented, Messenger of Allah. How about you do something that would make him feel honored?"

The Prophet ﷺ replied, "You are right! As we enter the town, announce that 'whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan and whoever remains home and keeps their doors closed is safe." (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 24-25/3021)

To the questions that were asked to him from time to time, the Prophet ﷺ would respond by considering the questioner's circumstances, and would follow methods appropriate to the person.

To the various people who inquired 'what the most virtuous deed' is, the Prophet ﷺ gave different answers depending on their circumstances.

"The most virtuous deeds are belief in Allah, struggling in His way and an accepted pilgrimage!" (Bukhari, Hajj, 4)

"It is salat performed on time!" (Bukhari, Mawaqit, 5)

"…the remembrance of Allah!" (Muwatta', Quran, 24)

"…to love for the sake of Allah!" (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 2)

"…Emigration!" (Nesai, Bay'ah, 14)

"…to serve one's parents!" (Ibn Athir, Usdu'l-Ghaba, IV, 330)

4. For the Noble Prophet ﷺ, providing ease and offering glad tidings were the basics of all affairs and he strictly abided by these principles in his calling.

It is said in a hadith:

"Provide ease, not difficulty; give glad tidings, do not drive people away." (Bukhari, Ilm 11, Adab, 80)

Correspondingly, the Almighty states:

يُرِيدُ اللهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

"…Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire difficulty for you." (al-Baqara, 185)

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

"…and My mercy encompasses all things…" (al-Araf, 156)

In what could be regarded as a commentary of the above *ayah*, the Prophet ﷺ has said:

"When Allah the Almighty created all creation, he wrote in His Book, hanging above His Throne: 'My mercy has vanquished my anger!'" (Bukhari, Tawhid, 15, 22, 28, 55; Muslim, Tawba, 14-16)

Abu Hurayra ﷺ narrates the following incident:

"An Arab from the desert had urinated in the Masjid of Medina. The Companions immediately began rebuking him, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ said:

'Leave the man alone. Just wash that place with a bucket of water after he is done. You have come to provide ease, not to cause difficulty." (Bukhari, Wudu, 58; Adab, 80)

5. An important part of the Prophet's ﷺ invitation was to warn of Divine punishment and to encourage preparation for the Hereafter.

When the Gracious Prophet ﷺ first began his call, he addressed his kin, the children of Hashim in the following words:

"I hereby call you to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, He is One and without a partner. And I am His servant and messenger. If you accept this as it is, then I shall guarantee Paradise for you.

But on the Day of Judgment, if you do not come with good deeds and instead arrive with a world of sin on your shoulders, then I shall turn away from you! Then, you will plead, 'O Messenger of Allah'…And I will then do 'such and such'".

When the Messenger of Allah said 'I will then do such and such', he physically turned his face away from them, repeating the action twice." (Ibn Ishaq, p. 128; Yakubi, II, 27)

6. Not only did the Prophet ﷺ invite people verbally, he also brought his words to life through practice, and effectively invited them also through his overall behavior.

The most effective form of inviting to Islam is by living it. The Companions of the Prophet had devoted themselves to Islam to carry the voice of belief to the most remote corners of the world and to guide humanity. Today, exhibiting the beauties of Islam to the world with the same excitement and vigor still remains the best form of invitation.

It is a duty upon all Muslims to invite others to Islam through explanation and practice, to the best of their ability. Today, the rise of resources and ways of communication means that this responsibility has increased all the more. Those who live in the most distant places of the world and thus have not even heard of Islam, and many others whose guidance we have neglected even though they are very close to us, will grab us by the scruff of our necks and call us into account in the Hereafter.

Regarding the above, Abu Hurayra ﷺ states:

"We used to hear of a man, who, on the Day of Judgment, is going to grab another by the scruff of his neck and call him into account. The other man will ask:

'What do you want from me? I do not even know you!'

'You used to see me on Earth committing bad deeds,' the man will reply, 'without ever warning me.'" (Rudani, Jam'ul-Fawaid, V, 384)

Islam's Invitation and Missionary Work

In Islam, the aim of invitation is to communicate the true religion to people[157]. It is not to Islamicize people by resorting to all kinds of measures[158].

On the other hand, Christian missionary activity seeks to Christianize and baptize its subjects at all costs.[159] Paul of Tarsus, taken as a model by missionaries, explains his approach in one of his letters as follows:

"I am free, I am nobody's slave. But just to win over more people, I have become a slave of all. To win over the Jews, I acted like a Jew. Though I do not adhere to the Canon, I acted as if I did, to win over its adherents. And though I follow the laws of Jesus Christ, to win over the lawless I acted like a lawless myself. To win over the weak, I became weak with them. By fair means or foul, to save some, I had become everything with everyone."[160]

As seen, Paul justifies all the means that lead to the desired end, without recognizing any principles or borders. Islam, on the other, hand prohibits using unlawful means for lawful ends. This incorrect method adopted by Christianity ever since its beginning-that is, the attempt to Christianize masses by all means instead of simply delivering the message to them-has led to the decay of the essence of Christianity and the change of the message wherever it went, resulting in divisions among its followers.

In such activities, it is not uncommon to see missionaries approach socially and politically deprived communities, as well as the poor, refugees, minorities, and victims of war and natural disasters, and exploit their physical and mental sufferings by virtually trying to buy their beliefs.

On an another note, it is a well known fact that missionary activities are closely linked to imperialism, and their motivation could therefore be seen as more political than religious. By taking residence in their targeted countries, missionaries aim to Christianize locals under the veil of schools, foreign language courses and similar activities of education.

Following the way of Paul, today's missionaries take care to hide their true identities and appear in a guise acceptable to their environments. To endear themselves to Muslims, for instance, missionaries tend to recite verses from the Quran, dress in Muslim clothes, use Islamic terms like 'hodja' and 'masjid' instead of

157. See al-Mâida, 67.
158. See al-Baqara, 256; Yâ-sîn, 17.
159. See Matthew 28:19-20.
160. See Corinthians I, 9:19-22.

'priest' or 'church'. Again, to turn people away from their religions and warm others to themselves, they have made it a principle to give concessions from Christianity.[161]

In the face of such frantic missionary activity, it is important for Muslims to pay attention to educating both themselves and their children, to learn and practice Islam in the best way and to communicate it to others. Muslims can at least take a great lesson from missionaries who go through a great effort to spread an altered religion, and must strive to live Islam through practice. The gift of Islam for which we can never be thankful enough requires that one never forgets the responsibility of invitation.

The late Mehmed Akif refers below to the overall Muslim weakness in this area:

While missionaries roam night and day,
Who knows, Revelation perhaps the ulama await!

The Attitudes of Abu Lahab and his Wife against the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet's ﷺ home was situated between the houses of two wretched figures, Abu Lahab and Uqbah ibn Abi Muayt. They used to dump all kinds of filth in front of the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ door. Though this would break the Prophet's ﷺ gentle and pure heart, he would only say:

"What kind of neighbors are you, sons of Abd Manaf?" and remove the filth away from his doorstep. (Ibn Saad, I, 201)

While about to do the same vile act one day, Abu Lahab was seen by Hamza ﷺ, who, grabbing the filth from Abu Lahab's hands, emptied it on his head. All Abu Lahab could do was to clean his head of the dirt, while firing insults at Hamza ﷺ.[162]

Neither did Umm Jameel ever lag behind her husband Abu Lahab in inflicting torment on the Messenger of Allah. Every night she would prepare a bundle from the thorny branches of trees, and hanging them around her neck, she would throw them at night on the path of the Prophet ﷺ, so that he would step on the prickles. But the Prophet ﷺ would walk over them, as if walking over silk.[163]

Their wrongdoings brought about the revelation of the chapter al-Masad. When Umm Jameel heard it, grabbing a large stone in her hand, she went out searching for the Prophet ﷺ. Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had been sitting by the Kaabah with Abu Bakr ﷺ.

Seeing her from a distance, Abu Bakr said:

161. See Şinâsi Gündüz, p. 5-28.
162. See Ibn Asîr, *al-Kâmil,* II, 70.
163. See Ibn Hisham , I, 376; Qurtubî, XX, 240.

"Umm Jameel is heading this way, Messenger of Allah. I am worried that she will see you and cause you distress. If only you had gotten up and left before she saw you."

"She will not be able to see me", the Gracious Prophet ﷺ replied.

Indeed, even though Umm Jameel stood next to them, she could not see the Prophet ﷺ. After ranting awhile to Abu Bakr ؓ, she left.[164]

Before Prophethood, the Prophet's ﷺ daughter Umm Kulthum had already been married to Abu Lahab's son Utaybah, while his ﷺ other daughter Ruqayya was engaged to Abu Lahab's other son Utbah. Upon the revelation of al-Masad, Umm Jameel told her sons to:

"Separate from Ruqayya and Umm Kulthum. They have abandoned our religion!"

And so did Abu Lahab. "If you do not leave Muhammad's daughters, stay out of my sight!" he bellowed.

Utaybah thereupon went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "Damn your religion! I hereby divorce your daughter. From now on do not ever come near me, and I will never come near you!" After these words, he insolently ripped the shirt of the Prophet ﷺ.

In the face of such rudeness, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed,

"Allah…Unleash upon him one of your dogs!"

After a while, Utaybah joined a caravan on a trade journey. They stopped by at a place called Zarqa. When, that night, a lion began circling the caravan, Utaybah remarked:

"Oh my...! It is going to come and get me just as Muhammad had prayed. I can just feel it! He may be in Mecca, and I in Damascus, but if I die, Ibn Abi Kabshah[165] is responsible!"

After roaming around them awhile that night the lion eventually left. Utaybah's friends placed him in between them and went back to sleep. Then suddenly the lion

164. See Ibn Hisham , I, 378-379; Qurtubî, XX, 234.

165. Previously, a man by the name of Abu Kabshah from the tribe of Hudaa had opposed his tribesmen over the worship of idols. Likening the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Abu Kabshah, the Meccan idolaters would sometimes refer to him as Ibn Abi Kabshah, that is the son of Abu Kabshah. According to another account, Abu Kabshah could have been the label of one of either the maternal or paternal grandfathers of the Prophet ﷺ, or even his foster father, i.e. Halimah's husband.

returned. Slowly sniffing its way through the group, the lion came all the way up to Utaybah. So fiercely and swiftly did the lion lunge towards Utaybah's head that the idolater, at that moment, began coming to terms with a horrendous death. He could only but scream, "Didn't I tell you that Muhammad is a man of his word?"

Hearing of his son's terrible death, Abu Lahab responded in a similar way:

"I knew Muhammad's wrath would target my son one day..."[166]

The Light of Being ﷺ experienced the torment of many idolaters like Abu Lahab during this period. Responding with patience and endurance, he nevertheless continued his calling.

Meccan Attempts of Reconciliation

That the Prophet ﷺ continued inviting people to Islam without taking heed of anything, drove the idolaters mad. They began voicing their anger to Muslims and to the new religion that stood in the way of their self-interests. They ran to Abu Talib and explained him of their concerns, begging him to prevent his nephew. Abu Talib politely warded them off. He said nothing about the incident to the Prophet ﷺ.

Seeing no change, the idolaters went to Abu Talib once again and said:

"We have run out of patience, Abu Talib! You know that your nephew speaks ill of our religion and idols. He accuses us of stupidity. If you do not stop your nephew from doing this then we will openly oppose both you and him. Either talk him out of it or lift your protection from him, so we can deal with him how we know best!"

Upon these threats, Abu Talib politely explained to the Prophet ﷺ the idolaters' attitudes. Though he refused to lift his protection from nephew, he also hinted at his unwillingness to defy the idolaters, telling him to, "Protect both yourself and me!"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was greatly upset, since his uncle's words virtually meant that if worse came to worse he would lift his protection. His graceful eyes welled up with tears. After all, the Muslims were still weak, without the power to withstand the Meccan transgressors who thrived on power and wealth.

In the meantime, to overcome the difficulty, the Almighty advised the Prophet:

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ اِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا.

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا.

166. See Ibn Saad, VIII, 36-37; Bayhakî, *Dalâil,* II, 338-339; Haythami , VI, 19.

"…And remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him exclusively; the Lord of the East and the West- there is no god but He- therefore take Him for a protector." (al-Muzzammil, 8-9)

The Prophet's ﷺ sorrow had gone. With unshakable faith and courage, he uttered these famous words to his uncle:

"By Allah, uncle, if these men were to place the sun in one of my hands and the moon in the other, I would still not give up this calling!"

Not expecting to hear such an answer, Abu Talib was shaken. Although not a Muslim, he still loved the Prophet ﷺ like a son. Besides he had made a promise, when his father Abdulmuttalib gathered all his sons around him just before his death to ask which one was to take the little Muhammad ﷺ in his care:

"You know I am not rich, father, but I am a compassionate man with a kind heart. I would love to take care of my nephew. I promise you that. Entrust him to my care!"

His soft heart therefore could not bear to see the Noble Prophet ﷺ leave brokenhearted, and he shouted from behind him:

"Come and say what you like. I swear I will not hand you over to them…ever!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 276-278; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 96-97)

Unable to get what they wanted, the idolaters took Umarah, son of Walid ibn Mughirah, to Abu Talib, to make another offer:

"Umarah is the strongest and most handsome youth of Quraysh", they said. "Take him and make the most of his intelligence and strength. He can be your son. But surrender to us your nephew, who defies the religion of his ancestors and ignores their ways, so that we can get rid of him."

"What is this?" Abu Talib responded. "You want give me your son so that I can look after him on your account and I am to give you my son so that you can kill him? That is unthinkable!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 279; Ibn Saad, I, 202)

Afterward, the idolaters told Abu Talib to "Send a message to Muhammad. Let him come here so we can make him reasonable offers."

Receiving the message, the Prophet ﷺ quickly went. Ahnas ibn Sharik said:

"Stop speaking ill of us and our idols, and will leave you and your God alone!"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned his head to the sky and asked:

"Do you see the sun?"

"Yes, we do", they answered. The Prophet ﷺ then gave the following meaningful response, setting forth the greatness of Islam and its promising future:

"Could it be in my power to prevent its rays reaching you?"

"I swear, my nephew never speaks a lie!" Abu Talib commented, standing by.

The idolaters angrily left the scene. (Ibn Ishaq, p. 136; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 92; Ibn Saad, I, 202-203)

According to the account of Ibn Abbas ﷺ, the notables of Quraysh gathered at the site of Hijr near the Kaabah and swore on the names of idols Lat, Manat, Uzza, Naile and Isaf to jointly attack and kill the Prophet ﷺ the first instant they saw him. Each pledged to pay the blood money that was to fall to their share.

Hearing about this, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ Fatima ﷺ rushed to her father in tears and informed him of the terrible plot.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked for some water for wudu. He then headed straight to the Kaabah.

"There he is!" the idolaters excitedly exclaimed when they saw him approach.

But the majestic appearance of the Gracious Prophet ﷺ in front of them made them drop their heads and lower their gaze, despite their sworn pledge. None of them felt the courage to look back up. They lost all nerve to look the Prophet ﷺ in the face. Grabbing a handful of soil from the ground, the Prophet ﷺ, said:

"May you lose face!" as he flung it their way.

Each idolater struck with a dust of soil that day was eventually slain as a nonbeliever at the Battle of Badr and thrown in one hell-like pit. (Ahmad, I, 303)

After this incident, the wary Abu Talib gathered the clans of Hashim and Muttalib and asked them to swear on their honor to protect the Prophet ﷺ against the Meccans at all costs. All complied, except for Abu Lahab.[167]

Realizing there was no point in going to Abu Talib again, this time the idolaters went straight to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself:

"You are of a noble lineage and much respected; yet you do and say what no Arab has ever done and said until now. You have thrown into disarray. We have jumped at each other's throats. What is it that you want? If it is wealth, then we will give you all you could wish for. There will be no man in any tribe richer than you. If it is leadership you want, then we will make you the chieftain of Mecca! If you want women, just name the most beautiful girl in Mecca and you shall have her! Or

167. See Ibn Hisham, I, 281; Ibn Asîr, *al-Kamil,* II, 65.

if you have been put under a spell, we will take you to witch doctors. We will do everything to cure you.

We are ready to do what you want…as long as you give it up!"

The foolish idolaters thought they could turn the Prophet ﷺ away from his mission by luring him with wealth, rank and women, thinking that the Prophet ﷺ could never say no to the three baits always effectively used to trick men.

Wealth, fame and lust are three traps that wear down a person's will. It is striking that the idolaters could not understand that these and other vices alike had never found a place in the untainted life of the Prophet ﷺ.

So the Noble Messenger ﷺ responded, giving voice to this very truth in no uncertain terms:

"I want nothing from you, neither wealth, nor rank, nor chieftainship! The only thing I want is that you stop worshipping idols and worship the One Allah!" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 99-100)

But because the idolaters were under the grip of their egos, they could not grasp the noble mission of the Prophet ﷺ, even going to the length of asking him to worship their idols. The reaction of the Prophet ﷺ in such cases was compliant with the Quran's advice:

قُلْ اِنِّی نُهِیتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ الَّذِینَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ لَمَّا
جَاءَنِیَ الْبَیِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّی وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِینَ

"Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allah when clear proofs have come to me from my Lord, and I am commanded that I should submit to the Lord of the worlds." (al-Mumin, 66)

قُلْ اِنَّمَا اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَلَآ اُشْرِكَ بِهٖ اِلَیْهِ اَدْعُوا وَاِلَیْهِ مَاٰبِ

"Say: I am only commanded that I should serve Allah and not associate anything with Him, to Him do I invite and to Him is my return." (ar-Rad, 36)

اِنَّمَآ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هٰذِهِ الْبَلْدَةِ الَّذِی حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَیْءٍ
وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِینَ. وَاَنْ اَتْلُوَا الْقُرْاٰنَ فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰی
فَاِنَّمَا یَهْتَدِی لِنَفْسِهٖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَقُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا۠ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِینَ.

"I am commanded only that I should serve the Lord of this town, Who has made it sacred, and His are all things; and I am commanded that I should be one of those who submit; and that I should recite the Quran. Therefore whoever goes aright, he goes aright for his own soul, and whoever goes astray, then say: I am only one of the warners." (an-Naml, 91-92)

قُلْ اِنَّنِی هَدٰینِی رَبِّی اِلٰی صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِیمٍ دِینًا قِیَمًا مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِیمَ حَنِیفًا
وَمَا کَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِکِینَ. قُلْ اِنَّ صَلَاتِی وَنُسُکِی وَمَحْیَایَ
وَمَمَاتِی لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِینَ. لَا شَرِیکَ لَهُ وَبِذٰلِکَ اُمِرْتُ وَاَنَا
اَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِینَ. قُلْ اَغَیْرَ اللّٰهِ اَبْغِی رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ کُلِّ شَیْءٍ

"Say: Surely, (as for) me, my Lord has guided me to the right path; to a most right religion, the faith of Ibrahim the upright one, and he was not of the idolaters. Say. Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. No associate has He; and this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit. Say: What! Shall I seek a Lord other than Allah? And He is the Lord of all things; and no soul earns (evil) but against itself, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of that in which you differed." (al-Anaam, 161-164)

قُلْ هٰذِهِ سَبِیلِی اَدْعُوا اِلَی اللّٰهِ عَلٰی بَصِیرَةٍ

"Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me with sure knowledge." (Yusuf, 108)

قُلْ مَآ اَسْئَلُکُمْ عَلَیْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ وَمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَکَلِّفِینَ

"Say: I do not ask you for any reward for it; nor am I a pretender." (Saad, 86)

Facing the impervious attitude of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the idolaters asked him to at least stop speaking ill of their idols. Thereupon, the Almighty commanded:

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُکَذِّبِینَ. وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَیُدْهِنُونَ.

"So do not yield to the rejecters. They wish that you would compromise so they too would compromise." (al-Qalam, 8-9)

In other words, the idolaters who rejected the truth were claiming they could make peace with the Prophet ﷺ if only he abandoned those *ayah* which conflicted with their interests. But the Quran's warning against doing so was loud and clear:

اِذًا لَاَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيٰوةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا

"In that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double punishment in this life and a double punishment after death, then you would not have found any helper against Us." (al-Isra, 75)

That is to say, even in such times of difficulty, giving concessions at the expense of the principles is prohibited; in this case that would have meant the destruction of the Religion, which is what the idolaters so avidly desired in the first place. The more the idolaters returned empty-handed, the more they insisted with their foolish offers to save the faces of their idols. They even went to the extent of suggesting:

"Worship our idols every other day, and we will worship your God every other day; then our dispute will end!"

To this offer that totally clashed with the spirit and logic of Islam, the Almighty had the following to declare in the Holy Quran:

قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ. لَآ اَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ. وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَآ اَعْبُدُ.
وَلَآ اَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ. وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَآ اَعْبُدُ. لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ.

"Say: O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship. Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship; nor am I going to worship that which you worship, nor are you going to worship Him Whom I worship. To you be your religion, and to me mine." (al-Kafirun, 1-6)[168]

In the beginning, it was mostly the poor, the weak and the slaves who submitted to the call of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Though there were wealthy people like Abu Bakr who accepted Islam, they were still quite scarce in number.

That the Messenger of Allah rejected out of hand all sorts of settlement offers made by the idolaters like wealth and status, clearly proves the fact that he had no intention whatsoever of obtaining riches or titles, contrary to the claims of some. Indeed, even in times of greater opportunity, the life of the Gracious Prophet ﷺ

168. See Ibn Hisham , I, 386.

was no different from the poor. This was no doubt a manifestation of the prophetic morals of abstinence, humbleness and contentedness.

If he had wanted, the Prophet ﷺ could have accepted the Meccan offer of leadership and used its powers and opportunities for the future service of Islam. But the Light of Being ﷺ did not want to become mixed up in such politics and use it as an instrument for the cause, simply because Islam always observes the principle of loyalty to the honor of religion before making use of any given instrument. Muslims may therefore be forced to persevere and put up a struggle under various conditions but the path they must follow after all is the *sirat'ul-mustaqim*, the straight path devoid of deviation.

The Inimitability (I'jaz) of the Quran and its Affect on Listeners

The word *ijaz* literally means to incapacitate someone or to exceedingly go beyond something. In the technical sense, however, it means the ineffectiveness of the whole of humanity in producing something similar to the Quran, in terms of its eloquence, legislative value and its news of the unseen, as it comes from the highest of sources.

As Allah ﷻ, willed the last scripture revealed to humanity to be in the most perfect form and in the Arabic language, He gave those who spoke this language, from the earliest times, a zest for literary eloquence and articulation. By taking part in numerous literary activities and competitions, the Arabs were able to develop the language further and as a consequence, give it a richness and perfection that could enable it to express Divine words and meanings.

Such activities saw eloquence among Arabs become a profession. Poets and orators rose to publicly envied ranks. So it should be kept in mind that it was within this sort of an environment that the Holy Quran, the Divine words delivered by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, came to be regarded as the greatest of miracles, the most elegant of discourses.

Because the most important qualities that separate man from other beings are reason, understanding and expression, the miracle of the Quran, the last and most perfect Divine book, emerges in these very qualities. The Almighty says:

اَلرَّحْمٰنُ. عَلَّمَ الْقُرْاٰنَ. خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ. عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ.

"The Beneficent Allah, taught the Quran. He created man, taught him clear expression." (ar-Rahman, 1-4)

Many books have been written by numerous scholars with precise observations regarding the unfathomable *ijaz* of the Quran, of which we shall now present a small summary.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared his prophethood, the idolaters objected, saying:

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِ

"And they say: Why are not signs sent down upon him from his Lord?"

The Almighty responded in the following:

قُلْ اِنَّمَا الْاٰيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَاِنَّمَآ اَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ. اَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ اَنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اِنَّ فِى ذٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرٰى لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ.

"Say: The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner. Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Most surely there is mercy in this and a reminder for a people who believe." (al-Ankabut, 50-51)

The *ijaz* of the Quran is explicit in many aspects like its eloquence and style, richness of content, the convincing power of its principles, its informing of the unknown, its ability to constantly preserve its validity and its legislative supremacy.

The most important aspect of the Quran's miracle is provided by its eloquence and style. Entailed by eloquence is to say the most appropriate word in terms of content, aim or the subject in accordance with what the given situation demands. In the issues it deals with, the holy Quran puts eloquence into practice in the best of ways.

The Quran is also a masterpiece of clarity of speech. It is impossible to find the least of flaws in the words it chooses, in its sentences and the meanings they express.

Like the meaning, the wording[169] of the Quran also belongs to Allah ﷻ. This is the most fundamental difference that separates it from a sacred hadith. For that reason, changing a word from the text of the Quran with another from the Arabic language leads one to heresy if done intentionally; if not intentional, then the most it can do is annul a deed of worship owing to a change in meaning to a certain extent. Under the discussion *zhallat'ul-qari*, scholars have put forth numerous rulings in

169. Denoted here are the Quran's intonation, choice of words appropriate with the language utilized, pronunciation and clarity of expression; its eloquence, articulacy and fluency.

books of jurisdiction regarding the legal consequences of unintentional yet mistaken pronunciations or change of words during salat.

In spite of all this, the nonsense that it is permissible for one to worship with a translation of the Quran, which is at best produced only according to the understanding of the translator, betrays intellectual bankruptcy, to say the least.

The style of the Quran observes a balance between meaning and wording. For every meaning it wants to put forward, it uses a word most fitting for the purpose. It therefore establishes a balance between the meaning and the word, in a manner that befits the Absolute Possessor of Speech. This baffles even the most elegant canons of literature.

The famous Andalusian exegete Ibn Atiyya said:

"The Quran is such a book that if a word were to be removed from it, it would be impossible to find a better substitute even if the entire Arabic language was rummaged."[170]

Being a Divine word, the Quran expresses various parables, advices, debates, historical accounts, legal matters, and information regarding the Hereafter, paradise and hell, including verses of glad tidings as well as warnings, separately, according to the force of their meanings, yet within a unity of style, by preserving an equal level of harmony in their clarity and eloquence.

The Quran simultaneously addresses different people with distinct intellectual levels living in various times and places. When the *ayah* of the Quran are recited next to people of various levels, each present understands what he/she hears differently, according to his/her understanding. Again, this is a quality that surpasses human capability.

To sum up, the miracle of each prophet belongs to his time. But as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has been sent a prophet for the whole of humankind, his greatest miracle, the Quran, will remain strong until the Day of Judgment, incorporating within its realm all times and places.

To help illustrate the existence and power of the Almighty, the Quran also makes numerous references to scientific truths. The rapid development and discoveries in the scientific arena during the last 1400 years has not only been unable to refute any verdict of the Holy Quran, but has further strengthened them. Again, this only highlights its miraculous nature.

The nations of the world today have their most capable minds produce encyclopedias with which they vie against one another. One can think of the

170. Zarqânî, *Manâhilü'l-İrfân,* II, 325; Muhammad Abdullâh Dırâz, *an-Nabau'l-Azîm,* s. 112; Atâ, *Azamatu'l-Kur'ân,* p. 85.

British *Britannica* or the French *Larousse* as examples. But they also have the frequent need to produce additional volumes for correcting or completing previous errors or deficiencies. New discoveries force them to make additions and correct previous claims. Even in our times marked by an incredible vigor of scientific discovery, encyclopedias produced by scientific commissions that consist of the most exceptional scholars, are continually outdated and need correction. Yet, the need to correct the scientific assertions of the Quran has not come about over the passage of centuries. This is one of the greatest proofs of its Divine origin, and of the fact that it is the Word of the Almighty.

In a hadith which emphasizes the fact that the miracle of the Holy Quran is destined to survive until eternity, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ says:

"The Quran is a Divine word that guides man to safety from all the tribulations to come, that gives news of past peoples, forewarnings of future peoples and verdicts of all controversies to take place between them. It separates between right and wrong. It is not vain. The transgressor who deserts it, Allah destroys; the person who seeks any other guidance Allah causes to go astray. It is Allah's strong rope, His great remembrance and straight path. Those who live by it never deviate, the tongues that pronounce it are never mistaken, its scholars can never have enough of its insights. Its repetition never wears it out, and its miracles never cease to amaze. Upon hearing it the jinn could not help but say,

اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْاٰنًا عَجَبًا

'Surely, we have heard a fabulous Quran!' (al-Jinn, 1). Those who speak with it only speak the truth, and those who judge with it only judge with justice. Those who practice it reap rewards and those who call to it find in it the truest of paths." (Tirmidhi, Fadail'ul-Quran, 14; Darimi, Fadail'ul-Quran, 1)

The Quran is a miracle in all its aspects. It is in this respect that the Quran has for centuries continued to challenge all men and jinn, as it did the Arabs of then, who had reached the heights of eloquence, to produce a similar text. This reminds one of the 34th *ayah* of at-Tur:

فَلْيَاْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهٖٓ اِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

"Then let them bring a speech like it if they are truthful."

The helplessness of the idolaters before this Divine challenge was further exposed by the Almighty:

اَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرٰيهُ قُلْ فَاْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِثْلِهٖ مُفْتَرَيَاتٍ
وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"Or, do they say: He has forged it. Say: Then bring ten forged chapters like it and call upon anyone you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." (Hud, 13)

وَاِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِى رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلٰى عَبْدِنَا فَاْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِنْ مِثْلِهٖ
وَادْعُوا شُهَدَآءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful." (al-Baqara, 23)[171]

قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يَاْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ
لَا يَاْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

"Say: If men and jinn should combine together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like of it, even if they helped one another." (al-Isra, 88)

But the idolaters continued with their unfounded claims that only served to reveal their own inconsistencies and misgivings.

اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْثَرُ

"…This is nothing but enchantment, narrated (from others)." (al-Muddaththir, 24)

سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرٌّ

"…Transient magic." (al-Qamar, 2)

اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اِفْكٌ افْتَرٰيهُ

"…This is nothing but a lie which he has forged." (al-Furqan, 4)

اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيرُ الْاَوَّلِينَ

"…This is nothing but the stories of the ancients." (al-Anaam, 25)

171. Also see, Yûnus, 38.

Up until now, the Quran's challenge to its enemies to bring forth a similar chapter has resulted in their utter defeat. And that is how it shall remain until the end of time.

Over the years, Christians have been able to raise priests eloquent enough to teach Arabic to Arabs. But none of them has ever had had the nerve to answer the particular challenge of the Quran. Shouldn't the nonbelievers, who have endured all kinds of hardship just to extinguish the light of Islam, instead have simply tried to answer this challenge? Isn't just this historical fact enough to prove the greatness of the Quranic challenge and the helplessness of its enemies, as well as the impossibility of refuting it?

Many figures famed for their eloquence have worked for months on end behind closed doors without being able to even produce a verse at the end of their painstaking efforts. Musaylama and many others who tried producing alternatives to the Quran in fact only brought ridicule upon themselves, as what they wrote only served to highlight their own ineptness. This is because the Quran is not only a miracle of eloquence, but also a book that encompasses within itself all ages with all their truths. Therefore, it is certainly impossible for a vulnerable human being, who does not even know where and when he is to die, to produce a miraculous verse of truths beyond compare. The current fate of the Torah and the Bible are clear. Having been subjected to human intervention, both books are several removes from their origins and are now virtually a web of contradictions.

A look at past experiences provides the greatest and unchallengeable proof of the fact that the Holy Quran is a book of miraculous eloquence. From the first day of its revelation through to the 15 centuries that have passed as we speak, there has not been a single person to challenge the Divine Book with success. Those who have tried have only humiliated themselves before all humankind and have incurred shame that will never leave them until the Final Hour.[172]

The Quran is neither poetry nor prose. It has a style that combines the characteristics of both poetry and prose with an unsurpassable inner harmony that presides over its style. One can feel the affects of this inner harmony in the depths of the soul whenever one recites the Quran. It only takes a slight alteration of the order of the wording to do away with both the harmony and the meaning.

With this characteristic, the Quran has had an enormous impact on people. Hearing its recital with the pure tongue of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, has had many an Arab hasten to profess faith. As they could not produce a word of similar greatness, all idolaters accepted in their hearts the eloquence of the Quran. Their only reason

172. Bûtî, *Min Rawâii'l-Kur'ân,* p. 126, 129, 130.

for denying the Quran was that it stood in the way of their self-interests and that they found unbearable the idea of following an orphan in the Prophet ﷺ.

Ibn Abbas ﷺ narrates that one day Walid ibn Mughira came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him to recite the Quran. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ read him the following:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْاِحْسَانِ وَاِيتَآئِ ذِى الْقُرْبٰى وَيَنْهٰى
عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

“Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful.” (an-Nahl, 90)

Walid asked the Prophet ﷺ to recite it again, after which he could not help but say:

“I swear, there is such sweetness, such beauty and brightness in these words that they resemble a lusciously green tree, with a moist root and fruits overhanging from its branches. It is impossible for any man to make these up. Nothing shall defeat them and they most certainly will overcome whoever resists them.”

Leaving in amazement, Walid got up and headed to the house of Abu Bakr ﷺ and asked him a few questions about the Quran. Then, he turned up went next to the leaders of Quraysh.

“The things the son of Abu Kabshah says are amazing indeed! I swear they are neither poetry, nor sorcery nor mad nonsense! What he says is without a doubt the word of Allah!” he said.

When Abu Jahl heard him, he grumbled:

“I swear that if Walid turns away from his religion then so will the rest of Quraysh!” He then immediately went next to Walid and mockingly said:

“Uncle, your tribesmen are collecting riches to give to you, because apparently you went to Muhammad to beg!”

“The Quraysh should know better. I am the richest man among them!” Walid replied.

“Then say such a thing about Muhammad that will make him know your denial and dislike of him”, Abu Jahl suggested.

"What should I say? I swear there isn't anyone among you who knows poetry, *qasida* and *rajaz*[173] better than I. What he says doesn't resemble any of that. I assure you that what I heard from Muhammad sounded nothing like the words of man or jinn. It had a magnificent sweetness and elegance to it", Walid responded.

Abu Jahl was adamant.

"Your tribesmen will not approve of you until you say something against him!"

"Give me some time to think then", Walid then said.

After he had his moment of thought, he came out to claim, "It is but the magic of old!" (Hakim, II, 550/3872; Tabari, Tafsir, XXIX, 195-196; Wahidi, s. 468)

His story is vividly retold in the Holy Quran:

اِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ. فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ. ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ.
ثُمَّ نَظَرَ. ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ. ثُمَّ اَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ. فَقَالَ
اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْثَرُ. اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ.

"Truly he reflected and plotted. May he be cursed—how he plotted! Again, may he be cursed how he plotted! Then he looked, Then he frowned and scowled, Then he turned back and was puffed up with pride, Then he said: This is naught but enchantment that was passed down; this is naught but the speech of men." (al-Mudaththir, 18-25)

Idolaters like Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl and Ahnath ibn Shariq, who were preventing the public from listening to the Quran, once came to the Kaabah three nights in a row, without any knowledge of each other's presence, to secretly listen to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ recite the Quran. However, they were left red faced when they accidentally bumped into each other. After a moments shock, they reproached themselves.

"Whatever happens, nobody must know of this! We'll be disgraced if the others find out...Our words will no longer have any effect when we try to prevent them from listening to the Quran!" Then pledging not to repeat this ever, they separated. (Ibn Hisham, I, 337-338)

173. *Rajaz* is one of the poetic meters in Arabic prosody. The rhythmic and accented meeting therein of a slow and fast tempo enables it to be performed by a host of different instruments, evoking thereby the rallying of a variety of feelings. Making possible the expression of both joy and sorrow, *rajaz* is moreover said to contain around fifteen subbranches. (Tahir'ul-Mevlevi, *Edebiyat Lügati,* p. 120, "recez" article.)

Many people accepted Islam due to this inner beauty of the Quran. Celebrated is the case of Omar ﷺ, notorious for his temper, whose world was turned upside down in the house of his brother-in-law, when his heart melted, as well as his anger, at the pleasant sound of the Quran.

Another person who accepted Islam after becoming captivated by the Quran was Jubayr ibn Mutim ﷺ. Hearing the recital of chapter at-Tur from the Prophet ﷺ, his heart quivered, after which he said:

"I thought my heart would crack!" (Ahmad, IV, 83, 85)

His own account of the event is as follows:

"I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recite chapter Tur during the salat of maghrib.

اَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَىْءٍ اَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ.

اَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ.

اَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَآئِنُ رَبِّكَ اَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيْطِرُونَ.

'Or were they created without there being anything, or are they the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay! They have no certainty. Or have they the treasures of your Lord with them?' (at-Tur, 35-37) At that point my heart was about to fly out of its cage from sheer excitement." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 52)

During the first years of Prophethood, the sister of Imr'ul-Qays, the famous poet whose poems were hung on the wall of the Kaabah for their triumph in poetry contests, was still alive. They read a few *ayah* of the Quran to her. The woman, an expert in eloquence and clarity of speech, exclaimed:

"This cannot be the word of any human! With such words around on Earth, my brother's poems no longer deserve to be displayed on the wall of the Kaabah! They must be brought down to make way for these!" She then removed her brother's award winning poem from the Kaabah with her own hands. And naturally, the other lesser poems among the *Muallaqat* were also removed.[174]

Just listening to the Quran is enough for any person with the right mind to realize it is the word of Truth. It is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ was entrusted with the duty of presenting the Quran to the hearing of others.

The Quran in fact says:

174. See Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, I, 83.

وَاِنْ اَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَاَجِرْهُ
حَتّٰى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللهِ ثُمَّ اَبْلِغْهُ مَاْمَنَهُ

"And if one of the idolaters seeks protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the word of Allah, then make sure he reaches his place of safety; this is because they are a people who do not know." (at-Tawba, 6)

It is therefore clear that the delivery of the Divine word to people allows for the light of faith to take root in their hearts.

The melody of the Quran that captivates the soul springs from the harmony of its sound, from the impeccable arrangement of its words, long and short syllables and vowel points. Passing from one sound to another with exceptional harmony, it seduces hearts. Even those who do not understand its meaning can take much delight from its unique sound when the Quran is properly recited according to its rules.[175]

Idolater Attitudes towards the Quran

Islam spoke of truth, justice, the Hereafter, resurrection and reckoning in the presence of Allah, promising that no wrong committed will be left unpunished. That Islam was therefore aiming to put an end to their egoistic lives was a disturbing thought for idolaters to entertain. Islam was moreover throwing their idols into disrepute, declaring them as false. With the additional "great news" delivered by the Prophet ﷺ, Mecca began shaking. The opening of chapter Naba describes this terrifying scene thus:

عَمَّ يَتَسَآءَلُونَ. عَنِ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيمِ. اَلَّذِى هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ.

"Of what do they ask one another? About the great news; about which they differ…" (an-Naba, 1-3)

Because human beings are naturally predisposed towards the truth, hearts are never satisfied with the unknown. They always run to what is known. What they do not know and what they may never know therefore causes them severe anguish. Despite having been given insight by prophets, humanity has always been occupied with the problem of death. The mystery of death eats away at the mind like a venomous snake and causes terrible anguish. Some try to dismiss it from time to

175. Even the recitation of the Quran alone has therefore developed as a separate branch of knowledge, which focuses on the ten different styles of recital, or *qiraah*, known as the ten canonical readings (*qiraat'ul-ashara*). Akin to the *imams* of *madhabs*, each manner of recital has its own initiators, known as an *imam* of *qiraah*. Prevalent in Turkey is the *qiraah* of Asim.

time with various views and push its inevitability out of the realm of consciousness. But since death captures all with more tremendous force than even life itself, and because it is a reality that awaits all, to provide it with a clear explanation heads the list of the objectives of humanity.

This timeless riddle, impossible to grasp through human thinking, can only be undone with the power of Revelation. Though this news of the future brought by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and all prophets before him should have been welcomed with appreciation, it has only been met with ridicule and indifference by certain groups lacking even a modicum of human dignity. Idolaters and disbelievers leading a life opposite to the aim of creation, met the news of the Hereafter brought by the Prophet ﷺ with perplexity, and with a stubbornness and selfishness, turned their backs on the invite to eternal salvation, simply because it clashed with their selfish lifestyles.

The Quran speaks of the Hereafter as 'the great news'. The reason for this is clear. Regardless of their particular conditions, human beings feel collective anguish at the face of death. That all the paths of life ultimately converge in death leaves all hearts, especially those of disbelief, in pain. One would expect at least the severity of any news regarding death to be understood, to the degree that for a living being there is no greater concern. In fact those who have come to a proper understanding have abandoned passing desires for the true, eternal life. A life without taking a lesson from death is no different from a life of darkness and disaster. The star of happiness is only born with death, at the end of a life lived beautifully, which is the very reason why Islam has advised the constant remembrance of and preparation for death.

Troubled with the Quran's expressions regarding the Hereafter and death which, furthermore, clashed with their self-interests, the idolaters asked the Prophet ﷺ to change those news to their liking:

"Bring us a Quran that does not command us to stop worshipping Lat and Uzza. If Allah does not reveal a Quran as such, then you devise it, or change the one you have. Place mercy instead of punishment, permissible instead of unlawful, and vice versa!"

وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْاٰنٍ
غَيْرِ هٰذَآ اَوْ بَدِّلْهُ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِّى اَنْ اُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تِلْقَآئِ نَفْسِى اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا
يُوحٰى اِلَىَّ اِنِّى اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّى عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

"And when Our clear communications are recited to them, those who hope not for Our meeting say: Bring a Quran other than this or change it. Say: It is not

up to me that I should change it of myself; I follow only what is revealed to me. If I disobey my Lord, I surely fear the punishment of a mighty day." (Yunus, 15) (Wahidi, p.270; Alusi, XI, 85)

The idolaters did not know what to do. So they turned to oppressing, persecuting and torturing Muslims, which increased by the day and made life in Mecca unbearable. Like many other Muslims, Abu Bakr ﷺ also asked the Prophet ﷺ permission to migrate. Once he was given permission, he made his way towards Abyssinia.

One or two days into the journey, he came across Ibn Daghinah, the chief of the tribe of Qara. He said:

"A man like you, Abu Bakr, can neither leave his home nor be driven out. I swear you are the gem of your tribe! You do what's good and look after your relatives. You labor for those who cannot! Turn back! You are under my protection!"

With Ibn Daghinah next to him, Abu Bakr ﷺ returned to Mecca. When they entered the town, Ibn Daghinah openly declared his protection. The Qurayshis laid down some conditions.

"Tell Abu Bakr to worship his God at home! Let him perform his salat and recite the Quran as much as he wants there. But he must not disturb us by performing the salat or reciting the Quran anywhere else! We fear he will enchant our women and children!"

Ibn Daghinah delivered the Meccan requests to Abu Bakr ﷺ who gave his agreement. He made a small place for salat in front of his home. There he began praying and reciting the Quran. As he was a gentle man with a tender heart, he would become emotional when reciting the Quran, unable to hold back his tears. The wives and children of the idolaters began to gather around him, and listen admiringly. This again worried the idolaters. They appealed to Ibn Daghinah to either prevent Abu Bakr ﷺ from doing this or lift his protection from him.

He sent Abu Bakr ﷺ the message:

"Either stay home and keep quiet or declare that you have left my protection!"

Fully resigned to the will of the Almighty, Abu Bakr ﷺ gave the following response:

"I return your protection to you. The protection of Allah is enough for me!" (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 45; Ibn Hisham, I, 395-396)

Because the Arabs were very keen on literature, they admired and were greatly affected by eloquent words; so much so that sometimes even a rhyme was enough to praise one to the skies while humiliating another. Considering the enormous influence of the Quran which from time to time even had them under its grip, the idolaters took certain self-styled measures. In addition to having banned the recital of and listening to the Quran, the idolaters would also make noises to suppress the sound of the Quran they heard in one way or another, to prevent the warming of hearts towards it. Such is how the Almighty mentions them:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ

"And those who disbelieve say: Do not listen to this Quran and make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome." (Fussilat, 26)

Despite the ceaseless oppression and harassment of his tribe, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ continued delivering the message of Islam and inviting them to eternal salvation. The idolaters, on the other hand, would greet the neighboring Arabs who visited Mecca for pilgrimage or other reasons outside of the town, to warn and even threaten them against approaching the Prophet ﷺ and taking notice of his words. Claiming the Prophet ﷺ to be a madman, a magician and so forth, they would seek to keep people away from him, with allegations they themselves did not even believe.

When Tufayl ibn Amr[176] came to Mecca, he was met by a few Meccan notables who suggested, "You are a poet much respected among your tribe, Tufayl. Though you have come to our town, beware of that man among us! His condition has us worried. He has completely disrupted our community. His words have the effect of magic and separate a man from his father, wife and siblings. We fear that what has happened to us will also happen to you and your tribe. So never should you speak to him nor listen to anything he has to say!"

Under the influence of these words, Tufayl decided not to speak and listen to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at all. When he went by the Kaabah, he even stuffed his ears with cotton in order not to hear, even by accident, any of the words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. A while later, he felt ashamed of his actions and he thought, "What am I thinking? I am a poet with sound reason. I can tell a good word from a bad one. Then what could be wrong with listening to what the man has to say? If it

176. Tufayl ibn Amr ad-Dawsi ؓ was an honorable, wise and hospitable man with a flair for poetry. His door was open to all visitors. He would feed the hungry, protect those seeking shelter and aid those in need of help. Following his acceptance of Islam in the 10th year of Prophethood, up until the Hegira of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Medina, he continued inviting his tribe Daws to Islam. He was eventually martyred in the Battle of Yamama after showing great courage.

is good I will accept it, otherwise not." He waited. After the Prophet ﷺ left for home, he caught up with him and said:

"Muhammad! Your tribesmen said so and so about you to me. They scared me so much that I even stuffed my ears with cotton not to hear your words. Now something has come over me and I want to listen. Could you explain to me your cause?"

Tufayl describes what happened next:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained Islam to me and recited the Quran. By Allah, I had never heard words more beautiful than the Quran, nor of a religion more beautiful than Islam. Right away I became a Muslim and bore witness that there is no god but Allah."

After remaining with the Prophet ﷺ for a few days, Tufayl ﷺ asked permission to return to his tribe with the intention of spreading Islam. He asked the Noble Messenger ﷺ to pray to Allah the Almighty to give him a sign with which to call others to the path. With the blessing of the Prophet's prayer, he was granted a light right between his eyes, on his forehead. Then with his request, the light moved from there to the edge of his stick. In this state, Tufayl ﷺ returned to his tribe, busying himself with struggling in the cause until ultimately becoming a martyr.[177]

The first person to heed to Tufayl's ﷺ call to Islam was Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, the prominent Companion who narrated the greatest number of hadiths.[178]

Although they adopted such negative attitudes towards the Quran, when left alone with their consciences, the idolaters accepted the truth in their hearts, unable to keep themselves from listening to the Quran in secret. But then they found another excuse:

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ

"And they say: If only this Qur'an had been revealed to some great man of the two towns?" (az-Zukhruf, 31)

Even though they recognized in their conscience the truth of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Quran, their egos prevented them from accepting. They agreed that the Quran was a revelation from Allah ﷻ, but they ascribed error to His will. Their thinking, veiled from the truth by their own selfishness, told them that the Quran should not

177. Ibn Hisham , I, 407-408; Ibn Saad, IV, 237-238.
178. Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba,* II, 226.

have been revealed to an orphan of barely any wealth, but instead to either one of the rich men of Mecca and Ta'if, in Walid ibn Mughirah or Amr ibn Umayr.

Walid ibn Mughirah is in fact known to have said:

"Why should the Quran be revealed to Muhammad, when there is me, the elder and lord of Quraysh, or Amr ibn Umayr, the notable of Ta'if?" (Ibn Hisham, I, 385)

But the value of human beings in the sight of the Almighty comes neither from wealth or nobility, but from piety. Having said that, lineage wise, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was indeed the noblest among them.

Allegations against the Prophet ﷺ and the Quran

The idolaters, left helpless against the Prophet ﷺ despite all that they had tried to muster, showed they could be stupid enough to claim he had learned the Quran from a Christian slave, despite being well aware of him being unlettered. Could they not think that a slave capable of laying the foundations of a great religion would never leave the honor to another? Besides, after an effort of the kind, could he still remain a Christian?

The Quran responded to this unfounded claim:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ اِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِسَانُ الَّذِى يُلْحِدُونَ
اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمِىٌّ وَهٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِىٌّ مُبِينٌ

"We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear." (an-Nahl, 103)

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا
تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ اِذًا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

"And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand; for then could the naysayers have doubted." (al-Ankabut, 48)

Moreover, the Almighty advised His Messenger ﷺ not to become upset over the claims of the idolaters:

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَآ اَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ. اَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ
نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهٖ رَيْبَ الْمَنُونِ. قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَاِنِّى مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ.

"Therefore continue to remind, for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer, or a madman. Or do they say: A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time? Say: Wait! For surely I too with you am of those who wait." (at-Tur, 29-31)

قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ. اَمْ يَقُولُونَ
افْتَرٰيهُ قُلْ اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِى مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفٰى بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِى وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

"And when Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who disbelieve say with regard to the truth when it comes to them: This is clear magic. Nay! They say: He has forged it. Say: If I have forged it, you do not control anything for me from Allah; He knows best what you utter concerning it; He is enough as a witness between me and you, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (al-Ahqaf, 7-8)

Without the slightest intention of entering the right path, the idolaters went to great lengths to make up claims against the Prophet ﷺ and the Quran. But they knew the truth. Fearing the spread of Islam outside the borders of Mecca, the notables of Quraysh gathered next to Walid ibn Mughirah, where they asked one another:

"What should we tell the visiting people about Muhammad?"

Walid had spoken to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and had listened to the Quran personally from him. He suggested:

"I know all kinds of poetry. What I heard from him was not a poem. It was superior. Neither was it prose. I have never heard such an elegant harmony pervaded by an exceptional eloquence from anyone before. They did not sound like words of sorcerers either. They were certainly not the ravings of madmen; I saw not one sign of madness in him. We can hardly call him a witch, because he does not engage in their activities!"

After these words, Walid forced himself to provide a solution, as if to assist the ill intentions of the idolaters:

"But he separates a man from his brother. He sows the seeds of conflict between relatives. Thus his word can only be magic!" (Ibn Jawzi, VII, 403-404; Hakim, II, 550; Wahidi, p. 468)

Unsuccessful in their allegations against the Quran, the idolaters this time turned their insults against the Prophet ﷺ himself. Taking advantage of the passing

away of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ two-year-old son Qasim, As ibn Wail began spreading the rumor that the Prophet ﷺ had become *abtar*, that is, his lineage had been cut off and become extinct. By doing this, they wanted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to fall into disfavor among the public and cancel his influence on people's hearts.

But they found no success. Chapter Kawthar came like a slap in their faces:

اِنَّآ اَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ. فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ. اِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْاَبْتَرُ.

"Surely We have given you the Kawthar! Therefore pray to your Lord and make a sacrifice. Surely your enemy is the one who shall be cut off!" (al-Kawthar, 1-3)

As understood from the *ayah*, in whatever time and place, the common feature of those with malice towards the Noble Prophet ﷺ is that they are *abtar*, or cut off. This applies equally to the vulgar people with the nerve to claim the Blessed Messenger ﷺ was backward, to the idiots who try to project their own meanness onto the Best of Creation, and to the fools who see the religion of truth he brought as a "law of the desert." It is these and their ideas that are cut off, without prospect.

As expressed beautifully in a poem:

The sun of your face
Lights both worlds with grace.
The accursed, with no love for your children,
Are, on the Day, cut off more than Satan!

Just like those who rejected previous messengers, those who could not stand the Prophet ﷺ were mainly arrogant leaders and a crew of spoiled rich individuals.

The Almighty states:

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا فِى قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ اِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَآ اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كَافِرُونَ.

وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ اَكْثَرُ اَمْوَالًا وَاَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ.

"Never did We send a warner to a population, but the wealthy ones among them said: "We believe not in the (Message) with which ye have been sent." Say: "Verily my Lord enlarges and restricts the Provision to whom He pleases, but most men understand not."" (Saba, 34-35)

وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَهِينٍ. هَمَّازٍ مَشَّآءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ.
مَنَّاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ اَثِيمٍ. عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ زَنِيمٍ.
اَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ. اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيَاتُنَا قَالَ اَسَاطِيرُ الْاَوَّلِينَ.

"And yield not to any mean swearer, defamer, going about with slander, forbidder of good, outstepping the limits, sinful; ignoble, besides all that, base-born; just because he possesses wealth and sons. When Our revelations are recited to him, he says: Stories of old." (al-Qalam, 10-15)

In fact Abu Lahab, concerning whom chapter al-Masad had been revealed, was complaining:

"Down with a religion which treats me on a par with others!"

On the other hand, Abu Jahl, the fiercest enemy of the Noble Messenger ﷺ and Islam, would say, "We know what Muhammad says is true! But until now, whatever his clan did, we did the same. And now they boast of having a Prophet! Now how could we produce a Prophet like him from among us? Impossible! There is no way I can ever accept Muhammad's prophethood!" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 113)

Embittered, Abu Jahl had once also remarked during a fit of rage, "If I see him offer salat, I swill stomp on his head!"

He later saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ offer salat by the Kaabah. Though he made a move to fulfill his promise, he suddenly grew pale and was overcome with fear. He could not even hold on to the rock that he had picked up in his hand. He turned his back and fled. Those around him asked what had gone wrong. Trembling, Abu Jahl replied:

"As I drew closer to him, I was met with a wild camel. I swear I have never seen a terrifying beast like that before! It was about to devour me!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 318; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 92-93)

They knew little that the Almighty had the Noble Messenger ﷺand His religion under protection and He was constantly holding them superior.

Yet the idolaters still could not stomach the Prophet ﷺ and were distancing themselves from the truth of the Quran. They were simply running away from Divine reality:

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ. كَاَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ. فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ.

"What is then the matter with them that they turn away from the admonition, like frightened mules fleeing from a lion?" (al-Muddaththir, 49-51)

That the idolaters kept distance from the Truth even though they knew, and that guidance is only in the hands of the Almighty is treated nicely by a poem:

Ability does not suffice, Lord, without guidance from You,
To Abu Jahl, though he knew Arabic, what could a verse do?

Time came when, as part of the Divine test, the stubborn turning away of the idolaters grew into an unbearable persecution of Muslims.

The Period of Torture

Unable to get what they wanted from Abu Talib and failing to receive a compromise from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, this time the idolaters turned to terror as their solution. At first they could not harm those who hailed from large families or clans; the oppression of the Muslims had not yet become widespread. The Muslims subjected to the torture of the idolaters then were mainly poor, without many relatives, and slaves, male and female alike. There was virtually no form of torture which they had not been subjected to.

Khabbab ﷺ[179] was made to lie on fiery coal which was seared into his chest until the flame was put out by the melting fat of his own skin.

He was a blacksmith who had money owed to him by some idolaters. Each time he asked for it, they would say, "First reject Muhammad then we will repay our debts!"

But putting passing worldy riches aside, Khabbab ﷺ would reply, "I will never reject him! I am by his side!" and choose eternal happiness.

He gives an account of one these painful episodes below:

"One day I went to As ibn Wail to ask for my money. He said 'I will not pay until you deny Muhammad.'

'I will never deny Muhammad until you die…No, not even after you're resurrected!' I replied.

'What? I am to die and be resurrected?' he remarked.

'Yes', I responded.

179. Khabbab ibn Arat ﷺ was the sixth Muslim, and among the victims of the vicious torment exacted by the idolaters. He carried the scars of his torture on his back until the day he died. Following his migration to Medina, he took active part in all battles from Badr onwards. He narrated a total of 32 ahadith from the Noble Messenger ﷺ. He was well past seventy years of age at the time of his demise in Kufa, in 657. (37 AH)

'Then considering I will still be rich when I am resurrected, I will pay you then!' he said.

This was when the following Revelation came:

اَفَرَاَيْتَ الَّذِى كَفَرَ بِاٰيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَاُوتَيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا. اَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ
اَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا. كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ
مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا. وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَاْتِينَا فَرْدًا.

"Have you, then, seen him who disbelieves in Our communications and says: I shall certainly be given wealth and children? Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or made a covenant with the All-Beneficent? By no means! We write down what he says, and We will lengthen to him the length of the chastisement. And We will inherit of him what he says, and he shall come to Us alone." (Maryam, 77-80) (Bukhari, Tafsir, 19/3; Muslim, Munafiqeen, 35-36; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 19/3162)

Neither did his female master Umm Ammar lag behind others when it came to torturing Khabbab ﷺ. With a heated iron, she would brand Khabbab's ﷺ forehead. Khabbab ﷺ complained of Ummu Anmar to the Prophet ﷺ, who prayed:

"Help Khabbab, o Allah!" Soon afterwards, Umm Anmar caught a disease on her head, making her howl like a dog. They advised her to brand her head to soothe the pain. So upon her request, with a heated iron, Khabbab ﷺ in turn began branding her head on a regular basis.[180]

Bilal ﷺ[181] was subjected to the most ruthless forms of torture. His master Umayya ibn Khalef would inflict him with the severest of sufferings. He would

180. See Ibn Asîr, *Usdu'l-Ghaba,* II, 115.

181. Bilal ibn Rabah –radiayallahu anh- was more commonly known as Bilal Habashi in reference to his *Habash*, i.e. Abyssinian descent. He was among the first seven in Mecca to openly declare their faith. His mother Hamama was also a Muslim, owing to which both suffered much torment from the idolaters during the initial years of Islam. Celebrated for calling out the first ever *adhan* in Medina in the first year of Hegira, Bilal constantly served as the *muaddhin* of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in both war and peace. He participated in all the battles by the side of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. On the day of the Conquest of Mecca, he ascended the roof of the Kaabah to call out the *adhan* of victory. Bilal used to prepare water for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to make wudu, see to his personal needs, keep an eye over him at night during battles and provide assistance in matters of the state. He no longer could recite the *adhan* following the passing away of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. When Omar ﷺ was Caliph, Bilal left Medina to take part in battles across Syria. People there asked the Caliph to personally mediate so that he would again call out the *adhan*. Compliant with the request of Omar ﷺ, Bilal called out the *adhan* one more time. (Dhahabi, Siyar, I, 357) Reminiscing the times of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, all listeners were reduced to tears. Bilal Habashi ﷺ narrated 44 hadiths from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The great devotee of the Prophet ﷺ eventually breathed his last in Damascus, having lived over sixty years. Right before his death, it is reported that he was jovially exclaiming, "Tomorrow, Allah

make Bilal lie down on scorching sand and place huge rocks on his chest, sometimes dragging him through the streets of Mecca. After leaving Bilal ﷺ without food and water for a day and night, Umayya would make him wear an iron armor, placing him on scorching sand under the sun, where Bilal ﷺ would remain until his body fat would begin to melt.

Despite torturing him in unthinkable ways, the idolaters still could not get Bilal ﷺ to say what they wanted, and he would constantly utter:

"Allah is One, Allah is One, Allah is One!"[182]

At times the idolaters took this even a step further. Yasir ﷺ[183], the father of Ammar ﷺ, did not say what the idolaters wanted to hear and so was martyred under heavy torture. After being subjected to a similarly brutal torture, Ammar's mother Sumayyah ﷺ was savagely martyred by having both her feet tied to different camels steered to opposite directions. Hence Yasir's family ﷺ became the first martyrs of Islam.[184]

One day the Prophet ﷺ came across this noble family as they were being tortured, and he said:

"Be patient! Be glad! For undoubtedly what awaits you is paradise!" (Hakim, III, 432, 438)

Undergoing tortures of horrendous kinds was also Ammar ﷺ.[185]

The idolaters one day got hold of Ammar ﷺ, and forcefully holding his head under water, screamed, "We will not let you go until you insult Muhammad and praise Lat and Uzza!" And they did force him to say it.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was told:

"Ammar has renounced Islam!"

But the Prophet ﷺ replied:

"No! Ammar is filled with faith from head to toe. Faith has mixed into his flesh and blood!"

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willing, I shall reunite with my dear friends…the Messenger of Allah and his companions." His wife mourning the looming death of her husband in the background, Bilal, in the meantime, was expressing joy, murmuring, "How wonderful…" (Dhahabi, Siyar, I, 359)

182. See Ahmed, I, 404; Ibn Saad, III, 233; Balâzurî, I, 186.
183. Originally from Yemen, Yasir ibn Amir ﷺ had taken residence in Mecca where he married Sumaya, the slave of Abu Hudayfa. Together they had two sons, Ammar and Abdullah ﷺ (Ibn Saad, IV,136, VIII, 264). Yasir's family collectively accepted Islam, for which they were forced to undergo torture.
184. See Ibn Hajar, al-Isâba, III, 648; Zamakhsharî, III, 164.
185. Ammar's precious worth is verified by the following words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "Paradise itches to unite with three people: Ali, Ammar and Salman"; "Ammar always makes the best choice of what is offered to him". (Tirmidhi, Menâkıb, 32, 34; Ibn Mâce, Mukaddime, 11)

In the meantime, a weeping Ammar ﷺ came next to the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Wiping the tears from of his eyes, the Prophet ﷺ asked him what had happened.

"They would not let me go, Messenger of Allah" said the tearful Ammar, "until I insulted you and said that the idols are better than your Religion…"

"How was your heart when you said these?" the Prophet ﷺ inquired.

"Content with belief in Allah and His Messenger…and my loyalty to the religion was stronger than iron!" Ammar replied determinedly.

Then still wiping the tears of Ammar's eyes with his own hands, the Prophet ﷺ advised him, "If they again force you to say what you said, then do it again!"

Upon this incident, the following *ayah* was revealed:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اِيمَانِهٖٓ اِلَّا مَنْ اُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْاِيمَانِ وَلٰكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللّٰهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Any one who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters unbelief,- except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in faith - but such as open their breast to unbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty." (an-Nahl, 106) (Ibn Saad, III, 249; Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, II, 67; Haythami, IX, 295; Wahidi, p. 288-289)

This incident provides legal proof that an expression contrary to Islamic creed can only be said in a life and death situation and is otherwise not permissible.

The enemies of Islam used to beat Suhayb ﷺ[186] until he would fall unconscious.

186. Suhayb ibn Sinan ﷺ, or more famously known as Suhayb ar-Rumi, while still a child, was taken prisoner first by the Greeks and then by the Arabs. Staying in Mecca at the time as an ally of Ibn Jadan, Suhayb immediately accepted Islam upon hearing about it from Ammar. Relinquishing all his wealth to the idolaters, he made an illustrious migration to Medina. The following *ayah* was revealed in reference to him:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ رَؤُفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

"…And there are those who give away their belongings in order to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Compassionate to His servants." (al-Baqara, 207)

Upon seeing him following the Revelation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ exclaimed:

"You have made a profitable, a rewarding deal indeed *Abu Yahya*!" (Hâkim, III, 450-452) A skillful archer, Suhayb ﷺ played a part in all the battles by the side of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Of medium height, he had fair skin. A man of enormous generosity who sacrificed his entire life in the service of Islam, Suhayb ar-Rumi ﷺ passed away on the 38th year of Hegira and was buried in the Baqi Cemetary in Medina. He was 73 at the time.

Zinnira ﷺ was a female slave who suffered all kinds of torment at the hands of idolaters. She temporarily lost her vision from the effects of the torture exacted by Abu Jahl, on top of which he even mocked her, "See? Lat and Uzza have blinded you!"

"No! By Allah, they are not the ones who have blinded me. Lat and Uzza can neither harm nor benefit. Surely my Lord can give me my sight back!" she replied.

Come morning, they all saw that Allah had given Zinnira's sight back. (Ibn Hisham, I, 340-341; Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, II, 69; Usdu'l-Ghabah, VII, 123)

Many more Muslims had fallen victim to such pain and suffering. Among the exceptional companions of the Prophet ﷺ Amir ibn Fuhayra, Abu Fuqayha, Miqdad ibn Amr, Ummu Ubays, Lubaynah, Nahdiyah and her daughter ﷺ, are just to name a few. Tying chains around their feet, the idolaters would drag them out to the desert in the hottest hours of the day and placing rocks above them so they could not move, would ruthlessly torture them until they would faint and loose awareness of what they said. The idolaters would choke them and would not let go until they thought they were dead.[187]

All Muslims and most of all the Blessed Prophet ﷺ were deeply saddened by this, but unfortunately they could do little.[188] But the pillar of faith Abu Bakr ﷺ, who was well-to-do, bought seven slaves including Bilal ﷺ from their idolater masters and freed them, saving them from the claws of brutal torture.

Still, the torment was increasing by the day. After the weak and poor Muslims, even the more powerful and wealthier ones got their share of suffering, like the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself, Abu Bakr, Othman, Zubayr ibn Awwam and Musab ibn Umayr ﷺ.

By provoking the louts of Mecca, the idolaters would set them against the Noble Prophet ﷺ. It had become common to verbally abuse him, calling him a poet, a sorcerer, a magician, a madman and so forth, without even believing their lies themselves.[189]

Abdullah ibn Amr says he once saw the Prophet ﷺ perform salat by the site of Hijr near the Kaabah, when Uqba ibn Abi Muayt came, and wrapping his shawl

187. See Ibn Majah, Muqaddima, 11; Ahmed, I, 404.

188. Mehmed Akif gives poetic voice to the grief felt by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ over the sufferings Muslims were being afflicted with:

From the Prophet, do not you feel any shame?
That, if a thorn was to spike a Muslim, far away,
His innocent heart would be speared with its pain,
So against you, surely, will His Spirit stake a claim…

Hence, one must always act with the awareness that making a Muslim suffer is tantamount to placing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ under the same ordeal; and that requires one to refrain from infringing with others' rights, backbiting, breaking hearts and misconducts of similar malicious nature.

189. See Ibn Hisham, I, 309-310.

around the Noble Messenger's neck, began tugging it to strangle the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Abu Bakr ؓ made it in enough time to push Uqbah away, as he yelled:

"Will you murder a man who has come with clear proofs from your Lord, only because he says 'my Lord is Allah?" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 40)

Ibn Masud ؓ recounts a similar incident.

"One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was performing salat by the Kaabah. Already waiting there was Abu Jahl and his crew. Referring to a camel that had been slaughtered a day before, Abu Jahl said to the others:

'Who dares to bring the entrails of the slaughtered camel and place them on Muhammad's shoulder just as he goes down to prostrate?'

The most wretched among them quickly went and grabbed the entrails and placed them on the shoulder of the Noble Messenger ﷺ as he was prostrating. They all laughed. I was looking on from a distance. If I had anyone to protect me, I would have quickly removed them from his shoulders. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ meanwhile was still prostrating. He had not lifted his head. Then someone went and told Fatima ؓ, who back then was still a young child. She came and threw the entrails off from her father's shoulders. Then she turned around and shouted imprecations at the idolaters. They could not respond to Fatima ؓ in the least. After completing his salat, the Light of Being ﷺ raised his voice and said:

'O Allah! I resign Quraysh to You!' He repeated this three times.

The laughter of the idolaters was cut short when they heard the Prophet's ﷺ imprecation. Fear seized their hearts, as they had actually witnessed the acceptance of his prayers on previous occasions before. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then mentioned their names one by one:

'O Allah! I resign Abu Jahl, Utbah, Shaybah, Walid, Umayya ibn Khalef and Uqba ibn Abi Muayt to You' he prayed.

I swear by the One who has sent His Messenger with the Truth that I later saw each person mentioned by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that day, sprawled out dead on the battlefield of Badr. They were later dragged and thrown into Badr's pit." (Bukhari, Salat 109, Jihad 98, Jizya 21; Muslim, Jihad 107)

Despite all the cruelties the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had to face, he still did not give in to the idolaters in any way, compromising not an inch of Islam. He once asked the Companions:

"Who will go to the Kaabah and recite the Quran to the idolaters?"

Wholeheartedly agreeing, Abdullah ibn Masud ؓ ended up going and reciting the Quran to them only to be viciously beaten up. Abdullah's friends said to him:

"This is what we had feared for you!"

"Right now, there is nobody weaker than them in my sight. If you like I can go again tomorrow and make them listen to the Quran!" Abdullah replied.

But his friends talked him out of it.

"You have already made them listen to something they dislike. That is enough for you!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 336-337)

Whenever Abu Jahl heard a rich and powerful person accept Islam, he would go and taunt him.

"So you left the religion of your father even though he was wiser than you? But look at you…all you can do is to dishonor his name! Just know that we will no longer have you among us. Your honor shall no longer be!" he would say in a threatening tone.

If the person was a trader, he would intimidate them:

"We will ruin your business and bleed you dry!"

If the new Muslim was poor and weak, he would have them beaten and would try to trick them with false hopes in hope of turning them away.

Ibn Abbas ﷺ was later asked whether the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his companions were tortured to give up Islam.

"Indeed! By Allah, once the idolaters got their hands on a Muslim, they would beat him and leave him without food and water to the point where they could no longer sit straight, at which point he or she would say whatever they wanted him to. They would ask:

'Are Lat and Uzza gods along with Allah?' The reply would be 'Yes'.

They would even show a bug crawling nearby and ask whether even that was a god. Just to get away from the unbearable torture the person would go along with them. But after regaining conscience, he or she would return to the belief." (Ibn Hisham, I, 339-343; Ibn Saad, III, 233; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 108)

What we must do is to think about the scenes of cruelty we have touched upon, as well as those we have not, and appreciate that the blessing of Islam has reached us only through the suffering of numerous people, without any compromise.

If the Almighty had willed, the development and spread of Islam could have been much easier, without the suffering of any Muslims. But then the sincerity of Believers would never have been known, and their determination and sacrifice would never have come out, meaning that the difference between a Believer and a hypocrite, the truthful and the liar would have been blurred.

In the Quran, the Almighty states:

الٓمٓ. اَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ اَنْ يُتْرَكُوٓا اَنْ يَقُولُوٓا اٰمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ.

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ.

"Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'we believe', and not be tried? Most certainly We tried those before them, so Allah will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars. Or do they who work evil think that they will escape Us? Evil is what they judge!" (al-Ankabut, 1-3)

اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا

يَعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise while Allah has not yet known those who strive hard among you, and (He has not) known the patient?" (Al-i Imran, 142)

اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَاْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا

مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَاْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتّٰى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ

اٰمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتٰى نَصْرُ اللّٰهِ اَلَآ اِنَّ نَصْرَ اللّٰهِ قَرِيبٌ

"Or do you think that you would enter Paradise while yet the state of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you; distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said: When will the help of Allah come? Now surely the help of Allah is nigh!" (al-Baqara, 214)

The path of Truth is paved with tough trials. Such is how the Almighty has willed it. All prophets and persons of virtue have suffered and some have even been martyred for the cause. It is therefore not right for a Muslim to fall into despair when faced with difficulties. On the contrary, Muslims ought to know that the more trouble they endure in the way of realizing the command of the Compassionate, the more quickly they will attain His mercy.

Advising Muslims with Perseverence and Patience

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was after all a human being, saddened by the negative attitude he was met with, and grieved by the ugly behavior of those he was striving to guide. He went through such difficult times that he needed to be comforted.

His comfort and support came from his Lord, who did not want His Messenger to be overcome with grief:

اِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا

"…Surely His grace to you is abundant." (al-Isra, 87)

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ كُفْرُهُ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ. نُمَتِّعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ اِلٰى عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ.

"And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you; to Us is their return, then will We inform them of what they did. Surely Allah is the Knower of what is in the breasts. We give them to enjoy a little, then will We drive them to a severe chastisement." (Luqman, 23-24)

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِى ضَيْقٍ مِمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ

"And grieve not for them and be not distressed because of what they plan." (an-Naml, 70)

The Almighty was thus reassuring His Messenger, advising him to be patient:

فَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ
قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ

"Therefore be patient of what they say, and sing the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before the setting." (Qaf, 39)

His determination strengthened by these *ayah*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was easing the pain of his companions and mending their broken hearts.

Khabbab ﷺ explains:

"One day while he was under the shade of the Kaabah, we went to the Prophet ﷺ, complaining to him of the torment of the idolaters.

'Among the people before you', he began to explain, 'there were believers who were caught and placed in a ditch and were cut head down into two halves with saws; and there were those whose flesh was flayed with steel rakes, who still did not turn away from their religion. I assure you by Allah that He shall complete His religion and grant it supremacy. So much so that a person will be able to journey from Sana to Hadramut without fear, except of wolves for his sheep. But you are being impatient!'" (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 29)

Then the Blessed Prophet ﷺ recited the following verses:

لَا يَغُرَّنَّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِى الْبِلَادِ. مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوٰيهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ. لٰكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْاَبْرَارِ.

"Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the towns fearlessly. A brief enjoyment, then their abode is hell, an evil resting-place. But as for those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding in them; an entertainment from their Lord, and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous." (Al-i Imran, 196-198)

As the idolaters' persecution increased, *ayah* of the kind above served to console the hearts of Believers. In this sense, together with drawing the person closer to the Creator, severe tests and hardship served as Divine scales measuring the trust and submission of Believers in their Lord. The most fitting attitude for Muslims to display in times like these is mentioned in the Quran as such:

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ اٰثِمًا اَوْ كَفُورًا.
وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَاَصِيلًا. وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا.

"Therefore wait patiently for the command of your Lord, and obey not from among them a sinner or an ungrateful one. And glorify the name of your Lord morning and evening. And during part of the night adore Him, and give glory to Him a long (part of the) night." (al-Insan, 24-26)

It was certain for a Muslim who heard these instructions to become content at heart and acquire strength and patience to endure sufferings of all kinds. Especially the tahajjud salat performed at night served to bring the Believer closer to Allah and grant the soul with so much strength that the truth become fixed in the heart. The Almighty indeed says:

اِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ الَّيْلِ هِيَ اَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَاَقْوَمُ قِيلا

"Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing (the soul), and most suitable for (framing) the Word (of Prayer and Praise)."(al-Muzzammil, 6)

Although the command to perform tahajjud is directly exclusive to the Prophet ﷺ, nonetheless it is something the rest of his ummah can do if they wish, according to their capacities. The same goes for the rest of the other forms of supererogatory worship that have been advised for the pious to the extent it aids in spiritual progress.

Allah ﷻ, who has blessed believers with paths of happiness moreover declares:

وَقُلْ جَآءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ اِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

"And say: "Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish."" (al-Isra, 81)

However, those responsible for advancing the Truth are required to do what they can. As man faces many difficulties due to the test of servanthood, he may never reach the desired end without putting up a struggle.

The Almighty states that this also holds true for prophets:

حَتّٰٓى اِذَا اسْتَيْئَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّٓوا اَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِبُوا جَآءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا
فَنُجِّيَ مَنْ نَشَآءُ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَاْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

"Until when the messengers despaired and the people thought they had been told a lie, Our help came to them and whom We pleased was delivered; and Our punishment is not averted from the guilty people." (Yusuf, 110)

The more Muslim hearts were being relieved and their efforts increased by the revelation of these verses, the more enraged the idolaters were becoming. Far from stopping their torments of the Noble Messenger ﷺ and the Companions, they were every day coming up with new methods of cruelty. The suffering Muslims were made to go through was seemingly never ending, becoming more unbearable by the day.

Things got so out of hand that even the horrendous thought of assassinating the Blessed Prophet ﷺ began to cross the minds of the idolaters. Still, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the exemplar of patience, was seeking the protection only from the Almighty.

Not wanting His Messenger to give in to grief and agony, the Almighty was warning him:

فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِفَ وَعْدِهٖ رُسُلَهٗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ

"Never think that Allah would fail his messengers in His promise: for Allah is Exalted in power, - the Lord of Retribution." (Ibrahim, 47)

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ اُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ
كَاَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا اِلَّا سَاعَةً مِنْ نَهَارٍ

"Therefore bear up patiently, as did the messengers endowed with constancy bear up with patience. And do not seek to hasten for them (their doom). On the day that they shall see what they are promised, they shall be as if they had not tarried save an hour of the day. A sufficient exposition! Shall then any be destroyed save the transgressing people?" (al-Ahqaf, 35)

THE FIFTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

The Abyssinian Migration

Due to the idolaters' ruthless persecution, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised the believers to migrate, as neither could they freely perform their religious duties, nor could they fulfill their obligation of spreading the religion.

When the Companions asked where they could possibly migrate to, the Prophet ﷺ said:

"To Abyssinia! Over there is a king who does not oppress his subjects! It is moreover a land of the upright! Until the Almighty provides a path of escape from your sufferings, remain there!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 343; Ibn Saad, I, 203-204)

This first migration took place in the month of Rajab, in the fifth year of the Meccan era.

The first batch consisted of a total of seventeen people; twelve males and five females. It included notable companions like Othman ibn Affan and his wife Ruqayya, Zubayr ibn Awwam, Musab ibn Umayr, Abdurrahman ibn Awf, Abu Salama, Othman ibn Ma'zun and Ibn Masud ﷺ.

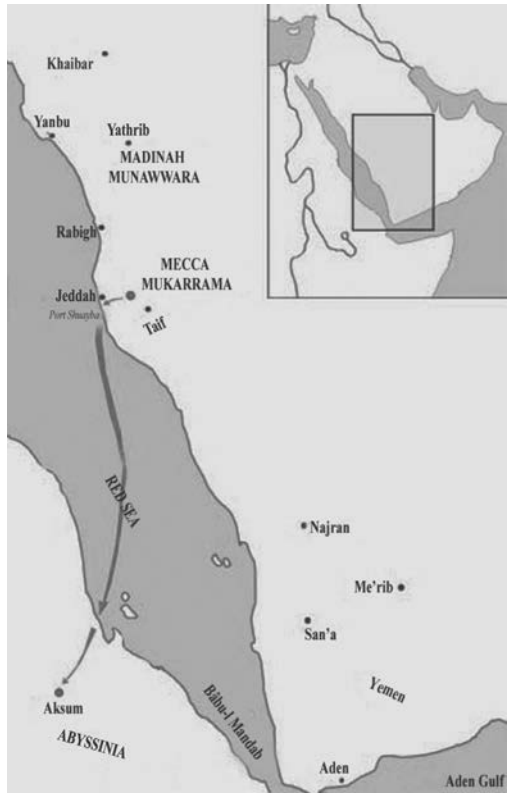
When the migrants, who had left Mecca in secret, reached the pier of Shuaybah, as a blessing of Allah ﷻ, two trading ships arrived. In return for half a coin of gold, they were delivered to Abyssinia. Although the Meccans did come after the migrants, they could not catch them. By the time they had reached the shore, the ship had long departed. (Ibn Saad, I, 204)

For a while, the Prophet ﷺ did not receive any news from Othman ibn Affan and his daughter Ruqayya ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would go outside at times and ask for news of his daughter from travelers coming from the direction if Abyssinia. Finally, a Qurayshi woman arrived with some news.

"Muhammad! I saw them there. Othman had Ruqayya on a donkey, while he was following them behind on foot", she said to the Prophet ﷺ.

Then the Prophet ﷺ remarked:

"May Allah be on their side! Surely, Othman is the first person since Lut ﷺ who has migrated with his family for the sake of Allah!" (Ali al-Muttaqi, XIII, 63/36259)



The first migrants could only stay in Abyssinia for three months because a rumor had spread that the Meccans had embraced Islam. So on the month of Shawwal in the same year, a group of thirty-nine migrants, consisting of thirty-three males and nine females, left Abyssinia. However, when they came within a distance of Mecca, they found out what they heard was untrue. But they could not bear returning to Abyssinia. They also feared entering Mecca without protection. They eventually entered the town under the protection of their relatives or friends from among the idolaters. (Ibn Hisham, II, 3-8; Ibn Saad, I, 206; Haythami, VI, 33)

The *Gharaniq* Issue

When the chapter an-Najm had just been revealed, the Noble Prophet ﷺ began reciting it out loud near the Kaabah. When he came to the verse of prostration at the end of the chapter, he fell prostrate to Allah, and so did everyone else present, believers and nonbelievers, man and jinn alike. (Bukhari, Tafsir, 53/4)

However, the idolaters were not in fact prostrating to Allah ﷻ, but to their idols Lat, Uzza and Manat whose names are derogatorily mentioned in the chapter.

This is the event that has provided material for the 'Gharaniq Issue' fabricated later.

The rumor that the Meccans had accepted Islam was due to this dual prostration that had taken place at the same time, only one of which belonged to the Muslims.

Even though this is all there was to it, a slander by the name of Gharaniq (which mean 'cranes') was later made up. It is alleged that Satan whispered an addition to the Divinely revealed *ayah* something of the meaning that the 'intercession of idols is to be hoped for', which supposedly sent the idolaters in a frenzied joy, for which they fell prostrate in celebration; and only later was the error apparently realized.

This story has been taken as fact by some, like orientalists, who have been hostile towards Islam. But leading scholars of tafsir, hadith and Prophetic-Islamic history have examined both the narrative chain and content of this rumor in relation to Islamic principles, and as a result have rejected it outright.

Firstly, the Prophet's ﷺ duty of delivering Divine Revelation to mankind has been protected from error and blunder. It is impossible for Satan to interfere with the duty of prophets. Considering the Almighty has stated that Satan cannot exercise control even on believers[190], it is unthinkable to suppose he can interfere with the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ call.

In addition to being protected from all kinds of blunder, error and sin in his duty, the Quran delivered through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is equally under Divine protection.

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

"Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One." (Fussilat, 42)

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

"Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian." (al-Hijr, 9)

The narrative chain of the Gharaniq incident is unacceptable. In relation, Ibn Khuzayma is known to have called it a "lie of heretics".[191]

That this supposed event has not been transmitted in an unbroken and authentic chain suffices to show its falsity.[192]

Neither can reason accept the Gharaniq claim, as it alleges polytheistic behavior, against the Islamic emphasis on the unity of Allah from the very beginning. Such claims that run against this basic, which is the cement of Islam, can never be reasonable. Chapter an-Najm just mentioned condemns idolatry from beginning to end, underlining the fact that idols are mere names and that the idolaters are simply following their vain desires. Even if the outrageous possibility is granted that a sentence, which the idolaters like so much to the point of falling prostrate, can be mixed into Divine Revelation, it is still unthinkable to assume the idolaters would be convinced. Amid all those verses that put the idolaters down, surely they could not have prostrated just for a couple of sentences allegedly mixed in by Satan.

190. See al-Hijr, 42.
191. İsmâil Cerrahoğlu, *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi,* "Garanîk" entry, XIII, 363.
192. Qâdî Iyâd, II, 132.

The best response to this claim is given at the beginning of the chapter itself:

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوٰى. وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى. اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا وَحْىٌ يُوحٰى.

"Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray. Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed." (an-Najm, 2-4)

Muslim scholars have proven from many angles that this is a mere claim that has come about as a result of anti-Islamic hostility. Besides, the thirteen-year Meccan period was a struggle to get rid of idolatry and reinforcing belief in the unity of Allah in the hearts, which cannot in any way suffer ascribing partners to Him.

The Second Abyssinian Migration

Once the Meccans found out that the first migrants had been very well received in Abyssinia, their concern grew and, as a result, so did their ruthlessness.

Othman ibn Ma'zun ﷺ, who until then lived comfortably under the protection of Walid ibn Mughirah, began thinking once he saw that the Prophet ﷺ and his companions were made to go through incredible torment, some branded with fire, others whipped.

"By Allah, it is not right for me to be safe and sound under the protection of an idolater, far from the torment that my friends undergo in the way of Allah! Allah's protection is greater and more honorable!" Thinking this way, he went to Walid ibn Mughirah, his protector. He said:

"Cousin! You have had me under protection! You have protected me very well and have been a man of your word. But now I wish to leave your protection and go next to the Prophet ﷺ. For me, he and his companions set the best example. Now take me to the men of Quraysh and tell them you have lifted my protection!" (Ibn Ishaq, p. 158; Haythami, VI, 34)

As the Meccan oppression and persecution got more violent, the Muslims were forced to migrate to Abyssinia for the second time that year. This time they were ninety in number; seventy males and thirteen females. They were headed by Jafar Tayyar ﷺ, the older brother of Ali ﷺ.[193]

Layla ﷺ explains:

193. Jafar ibn Abi Talib ﷺ, the cousin of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, had become a Muslim well before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the House of Arqam as base for communicating Islam, participating in the Second Abyssinian Migration with his wife Asma bint Umays. (Ibn Saad, IV, 34)
Jafar ibn Abi Talib and his fellow migrants returned to Medina from Abyssinia, in the 7th year of Hegira, during the siege of Khaybar. The homecoming migrants were also given a share of the spoils. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 38)

"Omar was very angry with us for accepting Islam. I was astride a camel as we were preparing to leave for Abyssinia when he came and asked where we were going.

'You have oppressed us for what we believe. So now we are going somewhere where we shall not be oppressed.'

'May Allah be with you', he said softly.

When my husband Amir came around, I told him of Omar's tender attitude. He said:

'I think you wish for him to receive guidance. But by Allah, there is greater hope for his donkey to become Muslim!'

Such was Omar's staunchness until then that he had made others despair that he could ever believe." (Haythami, VI, 23-24)

Ummu Salamah ﵂, the future wife of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, has said:

"From the moment we stepped foot in Abyssinia, the Negus treated us with great honor and respect. He always looked out for us. We performed our duties to Allah in peace and security." (Ahmad, I, 201-202)

The account below of Ummu Habibah ﵂, another of the migrants of Abyssinia, shows the level of long distance affection the Muslims had for the Prophet ﷺ:

"The Negus had a slave-girl by the name of Abrahah. Engaged to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Abyssinia and as I was preparing to leave for Medinah, she came to me and said:

'I ask you to send my greetings to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and tell him that I have entered his Religion."

Abrahah was very kind to me throughout. She even helped me prepare for the journey. Each time she came next to me, she made sure to remind me of her request.

When I came to Medina, I told about her to the Prophet ﷺ during the wedding and delivered him her greetings. The Messenger ﷺ smiled and accepted:

'…*wa alayhassalam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh*." (Ibn Saad, VIII, 98)

Jafar took part in the Battle of Muta in the following year, where he was martyred. Ibn Omar testifies to seeing his body bearing over ninety wounds inflicted by swords, arrows and spears alike. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 44)

Referring to the fact the Jafar had both his arms severed during the Battle, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ famously said, "I saw Jafar flying with angels in Paradise", indicating he had been given two wings in their place. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 29/3763)

Jafar has thereafter after been called *Tayyar*, meaning one who soars in flight.

THE SIXTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

Meccans Request the Negus to Hand over the Muslims

Though they took little notice of the first Abyssinian migration, the Meccan idolaters were alarmed after hearing the kind treatment the Muslims received there. If Islam was to begin spreading outside of Arabia, they thought, things could really get out of control. Thus they made an immediate decision to ask the Negus to extradite the Muslims, for which they sent Abdullah ibn Rabia and Amr ibn As with loads of gifts to entice the king and his commanders.

Once Abu Talib heard the news that Quraysh had sent an envoy to Abyssinia, he quickly wrote a poem to the Negus himself, praising him and warning him to beware of Meccan tricks. (Ibn Hisham, I, 356)

Before speaking in the presence of the Negus, Amr and Abdullah were able to lure the commanders with their gifts. They later presented the Negus with gifts, after which they introduced themselves and spoke:

"Your majesty! Some of our dimwitted youths have sought protection in your land. Though they have abandoned the religion of their forefathers, they have not accepted yours either and instead, they have gone and invented a new one! So their relatives have sent us to have them returned. After all, their tribesmen would know them and their wrongdoings better than anybody else."

The envoy feared that the Negus would listen to Jafar ﷺ and his friends and fall under their influence. Thus they wanted the migrants to be handed over before the Negus decided to listen to their side of the story.

The Negus' commanders spoke in support:

"Your majesty, these men speak the truth. We cannot know their tribesmen better than them. We should hand the migrants over and let them sort this out between themselves."

"Never!" the Negus intervened angrily. "I shall not give them up before listening to them first! I can do no wrong to people who have chosen my land over others for protection!"

The Negus then sent for the migrants, as well as his priests, who opened their books and sat around the King.

When the migrants arrived, the Negus decided to face both sides in his presence. It was a historical moment. The spokesperson for the Muslims was Jafar ﷺ, and it was to him the Negus turned first:

"Quraysh has sent an envoy to take you back to Mecca", he said.

"Ask them, your Majesty. Are we slaves, that they would want to take us back to Mecca?" Jafar requested.

The Negus eyed Amr ibn As for a response.

"No, they are all free", Amr responded.

The debate continued as follows:

"Ask them! Are we indebted to them that they want us returned?"

"No, they don't owe anything to anyone."

"Ask them. Are we murderers that they call us for trial?"

"No, that is not the case!"

"Then for what do they want us returned?"

Amr explained:

"…For they have abandoned the religion of their ancestors! They insult our idols! They have corrupted the faith of our youth! They have split our community! Mecca now stands divided into two!"

The Negus then interrupted to pose Jafar ﷺ a question.

"Since you accept neither the religion of your ancestors nor mine", he asked, "what kind of a religion is that which you accept?"

Jafar Tayyar ﷺ began to speak:

"Your Majesty! We were an ignorant bunch. We used to worship idols made of wood thinking they were gods. We used to eat carrion and bury our daughters alive. We were gamblers, indulgers in usury. We fornicated and saw no harm in seeing a woman engage in relations with numerous men. Neither did we know anything of the rights of our relatives, nor did we recognize the rights of neighbors. The strong used to oppress the weak, while the rich lived off the poor. We knew nothing of justice!

Then Allah the Almighty showed mercy on us and willed our recovery, and sent a Prophet from among us, from a noble line and a virtuous clan. We had already known him as the Trustworthy. He called us to the oneness of Allah. He taught us how to worship Him. He saved us from the idols of our ancestors. He warded off all evil from us. He banned the shedding of blood, usury, lying and the

misuse of orphans' properties. He constantly taught us what is good. He advised us righteousness, to keep our word, to treat neighbors and relatives with kindness and to protect the honor of women and the lives of our daughters. He saved us from savagery and taught us how to be humane. So we believed him and now we walk on his path. For that very reason we have earned the hostility of the Quraysh. We were tortured; and when the suffering became unbearable, since we did not want to leave our religion either, we asked permission of our Prophet ﷺ, and favoring you over other kings we came to your land. We assumed we would not be oppressed here and so we took shelter under your protection."

The Negus remained poised, calmly listening to what Jafar ؓ had to say.

"Do you know from memory any of what was revealed from Allah to your Prophet?" he then asked abruptly.

"Yes", Jafar ؓ replied and he began reciting the opening *ayah* of chapter Maryam concerning Yahya (John) ؑ and the birth of Isa (Jesus) ؑ. As he did, the Negus and his men broke down in tears from emotion.

"I swear in the name of God, that these words are from the same source of what has been revealed to Moses and Jesus Christ" said the Negus. Then turning to the Meccan envoy he stated:

"I will never return the migrants to you!"

When the envoy left the presence of the Negus, Amr said to his friend:

"I swear I am going to tell Negus of their belief that Isa, the son of Maryam, was only a man. That is sure to have them banished!"

The next day, Amr was again at the court of the Negus.

"Your majesty! They speak harshly of Jesus Christ. Call them if you like and hear it with your own ears!"

The Negus sent for the Muslims and asked them what they thought of Jesus Christ.

In a poised manner, Jafar ؓ explained, "We think of him in the way he has been taught by our Prophet. And he says, 'Jesus is the servant, the Messenger of Allah; His Spirit, and Word, born from Mary who had left everything to commit herself to Allah'".

Grabbing a twig of the ground, the Negus then remarked:

"I swear in the name of God, that Jesus Christ is nothing but what you say. The difference between what you say and the truth of Jesus Christ is not greater than this twig!"

Hearing the words of the Negus, the commanders around him began grumbling. Then turning to them, the Negus stated, "Grumble as much as you wish, but that is the truth!"

And to the Migrants:

"Now you may leave! You are safe and sound in my land. Whoever insults you will be punished! Even if they were to give me a mountain of gold, I still would not want to be the one to harm you."

Turning to his men once again, the Negus commanded, "Return the gifts of these two men. I do not need them!" adding, "If I were next to the Messenger right now, I would have wanted to wash his feet and serve him!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 356-361; Ahmad, I, 202-203, V, 290-291; Haythami, VI, 25-27)

According to another version, the Negus said:

"I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He is the man mentioned by Jesus Christ. Had I not been on the throne of this kingdom and without the responsibility of my people, I would have gone to him to carry his sandals." (Abu Dawud, Janaiz, 55-57/3205)

With his answers to the Negus, Jafar ﷺ offers an excellent of example for other callers to Islam about how to speak and what to say in a given situation, a method one should always keep in mind.

It is noteworthy that, when asked to read some of the Quran, Jafar ﷺ did not simply randomly recite a given chapter, but chose the most suitable part for the occasion, which happened to be the *ayah* concerning Isa ﷺ from chapter of Maryam. The same goes for his sound defense of the migrants, when the Meccans put forward various excuses to have them returned, as he underlined that their religion commanded only justice and virtue.

There are also many reasons why the Prophet ﷺ chose Jafar ﷺ as the head of the migrants. The choice itself shows the importance of choosing leaders according to their capabilities and as circumstances demanded.

A portion of the Second Abyssinian migrants returned shortly after the Hegira to Medina, while others waited until the Hudaybiyah Truce. The last group lead by Jafar ﷺ returned to Medina during the conquest of Khaybar, giving the Prophet ﷺ a reason for joy.

Hamza's ﷺ Acceptance of Islam

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not just simply sending his companions to the Kaabah to recite the Quran to the idolaters. He was also personally going to the Meccans from time to time to communicate Divine Revelation. During one of these occasions, Abu Jahl emboldened himself in his insults of the Prophet ﷺ. As if to show off next to his friends who had gathered around, he was just about to take it one step further, when a woman ran to tell Hamza, returning anew from a hunting expedition.

"Hamza, brave Hamza! They are insulting your nephew at the Kaabah. I fear they are about to harm him. They are going to something bad!"

Without wasting any time, Hamza ran to the scene, and using his bow, struck Abu Jahl's head so fiercely that blood began gushing out of it like a stream. Not expecting an interference of the sort, Abu Jahl was baffled, and fearing for his life, quickly fled the scene. In ones and twos, the idolaters followed, as they all knew very well Hamza's might. None of Quraysh's strongest men could face him without growing weak in the knees.

Straight after the incident, Hamza went next to his nephew, Muhammad, the Noble Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

"I have taken your revenge from him…You can be at ease!" he said.

"I will only be at ease if you accept Islam!" the Prophet ﷺ replied.

Suddenly, the curtain of ignorance lifted from Hamza's heart. Realizing the truth at that instant, the brave Hamza looked at his noble nephew with a smile, and staring at the magnificent glimmer on his face declared his acceptance of Islam.

Hamza ﷺ, the Prophet's ﷺ uncle, was only two years older than the Prophet ﷺ. They had also been breastfed from the same mother.[194]

By saying he could only be at ease if his uncle accepted Islam, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed the superiority of guidance over personal revenge and therefore of the eternal life over passing worldy desires. This incident teaches us that we should always choose the benefit of Islam over our personal interests and that we should seek happiness in the success of the Religion and not from personal achievements.

The day Hamza ﷺ became Muslim, Abu Bakr ﷺ insisted with the Prophet ﷺ for all the Muslims to go together to the Kaabah and invite everyone there to Islam.

"We are still very few in number", the Noble Prophet ﷺ replied.

194. See Ibn Hisham, I, 312-313; Hâkim, III, 213; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya* , III, 84.

But when Abu Bakr ﷺ persisted, with the Companions by his side, the Prophet ﷺ left the house of Arqam to go to the Kaabah. Once they arrived, the moment when Abu Bakr ﷺ began inviting people to believe in Allah and His Messenger, the idolaters charged at the Muslims and began beating them. The base Utbah, especially, trampled and kicked Abu Bakr's ﷺ face with his steel-studded boots. Abu Bakr ﷺ was left bloody and bruised. It took a great effort from his clan, Taym, to save him from idolater hands.

His clan brought the unconscious Abu Bakr ﷺ to his house. Fearing he would die any moment, they returned to the Kaabah, and yelled:

"We swear that if Abu Bakr dies, we will kill Utbah!"

It was well into the night when Abu Bakr ﷺ finally regained consciousness. The first thing he asked, with a mighty effort, was:

"Is the Prophet ﷺ all right?"

His mother Ummu'l-Khayr was constantly pleading him to eat something, but Abu Bakr ﷺ, as if not hearing anything, was constantly asking:

"How is the Prophet, is he well?"

"I have not heard from your friend, my dear", his mother responded.

Abu Bakr ﷺ then sent his mother to Ummu Jameel,[195] a Muslim woman, to get information about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When Ummu Jameel ﷺ came around and saw Abu Bakr ﷺ in such a horrible condition, she could not help but scream:

"I swear by Allah that only a beast could do something like this to you! May Allah take your revenge!"

Soon after, upon Abu Bakr's ﷺ request, she informed him that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was safe, waiting at the House of Arqam.

"By Allah, I will neither eat nor drink until I see him", Abu Bakr insisted.

Once things settled down and everyone went their own way, his mother Ummu Jameel took Abu Bakr ﷺ by the arm and carried him to the Light of Being ﷺ. The moment he saw the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ﷺ fell at his feet. The state of his dear friend affected the tender heart of the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Bakr ﷺ managed to say:

"May my mother and father be ransomed for you! I am fine, really. That sordid man knocked me around a little, that's all!" He then asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray for the guidance of his mother.

195. Umm Jameel bint Hatib, a Muslima, is not to be confused with her namesake, Abu Lahab's wife.

Not long after, with the blessings of the Noble Prophet's prayers, Abu Bakr's honorable mother also joined the circle of belief.[196]

Alarmed by the steady rise of Muslim numbers and the acceptance of Islam by leading figures like Hamza ﷺ, the idolaters held a meeting to come up with ways to stem the tide.

"The issue of Muhammad has gotten serious" they discussed. "It is starting to get disturbing. Let us send our most able poet and sorcerer to him, so he can have a word!"

They chose Utbah ibn Rabiah for the purpose. Utbah repeated at length the offers formerly made by the idolaters. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ listened quietly for him to finish. He then asked, "Have you finished what you have to say Abu'l-Waled?"

Utbah nodded.

"Now listen to me then!" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then began reciting chapter Fussilat, until the verse of prostration, for which he fell prostrate. Getting up, he then added:

"You have now heard what I have to say. Here it is and there you are!"

On the way back, Utbah was seen from a distance by the idolaters, who could clearly notice his change of expression.

Once Utbah came, they anxiously asked him to explain what happened.

"I swear by Allah that I have never heard a word of the like I just heard. Poetry, magic, sorcery…it's none of the kind! When Muhammad said:

فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ

'But if they turn aside, then say: I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of Aad and Thamud,' (Fussilat, 13) I blocked his mouth and begged him to read no further for the sake of our kinship. For I knew that whatever Muhammad says, comes true…I feared that Divine wrath would fall upon us.

Now listen to me, Quraysh! Leave him alone with his affairs, step aside! If Arabs happen to kill him, then you will be saved through others! But if he becomes sovereign over the Arabs, then his sovereignty means your sovereignty, and his

196. See Ibn Asîr, *Usdu'l-Ghâba*, VII, 326; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya* , III, 81.

honor means yours! Then, thanks to Muhammad, you will be the happiest of men!"

"He cast a spell on you with his words, Utbah!" the idolaters exclaimed in response.

"I only say what I think", replied Utbah. "But you are free to do as you wish!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 313-314; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 111-112)

Omar's ﷺ Acceptance of Islam

Having gathered yet again at the House of Nadwah, their advisory council, the idolaters decided to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. For the task, they chose the brave and hot headed Omar ibn Khattab, thirteen years younger than the Noble Prophet ﷺ, with whom he shared a common lineage in their ninth great grandfather. Omar had now unwarily set out to murder the Best of Creations ﷺ. On the way he came across Nuaym ibn Abdullah ﷺ. Suspicious of Omar's overall manner, Nuaym asked where he was headed.

"To kill Muhammad…the man who has brought a new religion in place of that of his ancestors!" Omar responded.

To distract Omar and gain some time, the prudent Nuaym cobbled together an excuse.

"I swear, Omar, you are fooling yourself! Do you think the sons of Abd Manaf will let you live if you do? Besides, you should take a look at your own family first!"

"Who are you talking about?" Omar asked angrily.

"Who else but your sister Fatimah and your brother-in-law Sa'id ibn Zayd? They have both become Muslims. Take my word for it!"

Having found out about Omar's sinister intention, by diverting him to his sister's house Nuaym ﷺ had gained some precious time to notify the Blessed Prophet ﷺ of the plot.

Speaking with Nuaym had irritated Omar all the more, and without further ado, he redirected his path to his sister's house, fuming.

Khabbab ﷺ was also present at the house at the time, busy teaching Omar's sister and brother-in-law Quran. The moment they saw the angry Omar approach towards them, they hid Khabbab ﷺ in a room, while Fatimah concealed the page of the Quran they were holding in their hands.

Omar stormed inside.

"What was that I heard you read just now?" he roared.

"You must have heard wrong. We have no such thing here", they said.

"Really? Then why is it I hear that you two have become followers of Muhammad?" Omar yelled, after which he charged at his brother-in-law, beating him up. While trying to intervene, Fatimah got her share of Omar's fury with a slap in the face, which however incited her to cry out:

"You can do what you like Omar! Even kill us if you wish! But we shall never give up our belief!"

A thin line of blood was trickling down Fatimah's face ﵂, as she spoke up with the courage of belief.

Not expecting such a reaction, Omar was stunned. The sight of his sister's bloodstained face had suddenly caused an ache in his heart. He regretted his momentary fit of anger.

"Could you bring me what you were reading?" he asked compassionately, as if to apologize.

"Promise not to do anything to it!" said Fatimah.

"I promise; I will give it back once I read it", Omar swore in the name of his idols.

Thereupon, hoping he might see the light of guidance, Fatimah ﵂ said:

"But you are an idol worshipper, so you are not clean! Only those who are clean may touch the pages of the Quran!"

Omar ﵁ was given the pages only after a complete bodily wash. He then began reading the sacred *ayah*[197] thereon:

طٰهٰ. مَا اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لِتَشْقٰى. اِلَّا تَذْكِرَةً لِمَنْ يَخْشٰى. تَنْزِيلًا مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ وَالسَّمٰوَاتِ الْعُلٰى. اَلرَّحْمٰنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوٰى. لَهُ مَا فِى السَّمٰوَاتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرٰى. وَاِنْ تَجْهَرْ بِالْقَوْلِ فَاِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَاَخْفٰى. اَللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى. وَهَلْ اَتٰيكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسٰى. اِذْ رَاٰ نَارًا فَقَالَ لِاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا اِنِّى اٰنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّى اٰتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ اَوْ

197. It has also been narrated that it was the first few verses of al-Hadid that Omar ﵁ read. (Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 217)

اَجِدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى. فَلَمَّا اَتٰيهَا نُودِىَ يَا مُوسٰى. اِنِّى اَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ اِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى. وَاَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحٰى. اِنَّنِى اَنَا اللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِى وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِذِكْرِى. اِنَّ السَّاعَةَ اٰتِيَةٌ اَكَادُ اُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعٰى. فَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰيهُ فَتَرْدٰى.

"Ta Ha. We have not revealed to you the Quran to distress you! But only as an admonition to those who fear. A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens. The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne. To Him belongs what is in the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil. And if you utter the saying aloud, then surely He knows the secret, and what is yet more hidden. Allah! There is no god but He! To Him belong the most Beautiful Names. Has the story of Musa come to you? When he saw a fire, he said to his family: 'Stop, for surely I see a fire, haply I may bring to you therefrom a live coal or find guidance.' When he came to it, a voice uttered: 'O Musa! Truly I am your Lord, therefore take off your shoes; truly you are in the sacred valley, Tuwa. And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Truly I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance. Surely the hour is coming—I am about to make it manifest—so that every soul may be rewarded for what it strives. Therefore let not him who believes not in it and follows his low desires, turn you away from it so that you should perish!'" (Ta Ha, 1-16)

Omar froze. All he could do was sigh, "How beautiful, how tremendous…"

He had been captivated by the eloquence of the Quran, by words laden with a meaning and wisdom no man could ever invent. He fell in the grip of some deep thinking.

Meanwhile, Khabbab ﷺ had come out from where he was hiding:

"Omar! By Allah, I have a feeling that the Prophet's ﷺ prayer is about to come true. Yesterday he prayed, 'Allah…! Strengthen your religion with either Abu'l-Hakam ibn Hisham or Omar ibn Khattab!' So the time has come, Omar, to fear Allah!"

"Take me to Muhammad!" Omar said to Khabbab ﷺ.

They left right away. Each step of Omar was this time filled with the excitement of faith, with the love and satisfaction of having grasped the truth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

When they arrived, Omar was met with by Hamza ﷺ, waiting with a sword in hand, having been informed by Nuaym ﷺ of the earlier episode. But little could they have guessed the way it had developed.

The Gracious Messenger ﷺ got up and met Omar at the courtyard, inquiring of the purpose of his visit. Spilling from Omar's lips were the following words of contentment:

"I have come to become a Muslim, Messenger of Allah!"

In thankfulness of what Allah ﷻ, has the power to show, the Prophet ﷺ exclaimed:

"*Allah-u Akbar!*"

The Companions followed at the top of their lungs. Another wish of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had just been fulfilled. When Omar ﷺ resumed speaking, the first sentence he uttered was, "I bear witness there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

Omar ibn Khattab ﷺ was now granted with the Prophet's ﷺ wish. As for Abu'l-Hakem ibn Hisham, better known as Abu Jahl, he was sinking more and more in his swamp of misery.[198]

Following Omar's ﷺ declaration of faith in the presence of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, with his proposal, all the Muslims collectively left the House of Arqam and amid praises of the Lord began walking to the Kaabah. This was a huge blow to the idolaters. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then granted Omar ﷺ the title "al-Faruq", for separating right from wrong.[199]

Omar ﷺ gives the following account of those times:

"There was not a single Muslim who was not harassed, who did not have to put up a struggle. But nobody was touching me. I thought to myself, 'I do not wish to be out of harm's way while the Muslims are made to endure all sorts of cruelty'.

So the night I became a Muslim, I decided to find the greatest enemy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from among the idolaters and tell him I had accepted Islam. Come morning, I went to the door of Abu Jahl. He opened the door:

'Welcome, Omar. What's the story?'

'I have come to tell you that I am now a believer of Allah, His Messenger and all that which he has brought,' I said. He cursed and shut the door on my face." (Ibn Hisham, I, 371)

198. See Ibn Hisham, I, 365-368.
199. See Diyarbakri, I, 296.

In similar manner, Omar ﷺ later passed on the good news to one of Quraysh's most prominent idolaters, his uncle Walid ibn Mughirah, and to two other idolaters who, all lacking the courage to get back at Omar ﷺ could only shut the door in his face and retreat inside their homes.

Abdullah ibn Masud ﷺ says:

"Omar's acceptance of Islam was a triumph, his migration to Medina was an aid and his becoming caliph was a mercy! Until he became Muslim, we could not openly perform salat by the Kaabah. When he became Muslim, however, he fought the idolaters, and ensured they left us alone. Only then could we perform our salat there." (Haythami, IX, 62-63)

Omar ﷺ persevered in Mecca in the way of Islam until the Hegira, putting up with all kinds of hardship together with the rest of the Muslims.

THE YEARS SEVEN TO NINE OF PROPHETHOOD: THE BOYCOTT YEARS

A Three-Year-Long Isolation Policy of Idolaters towards Muslims

Despite all preventative measures, Islam was growing by the day and this only fuelled the idolaters' hatred. They made an evil pact to take aim at the sacred existence of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and thereby hurl the universe into darkness.

"Openly or in secret, we will kill him!" they vowed.

Seeing the idolaters were determined to commit this horrendous act, Abu Talib began fearing for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He gathered the clan of Hashim and Muttalib, urging them to protect the Prophet ﷺ at all times and at all costs. The night in which the crescent of the month of Muharram appeared in the skies, led by Abu Talib, the clans of Hashim and Muttalib, including the Prophet ﷺ, met at Abu Talib's quarters. Missing from the assembly was only Abu Lahab, who chose to continue remaining in the pagan ranks.

The idolaters resorted to yet another vicious plan to put an end to Islam before it spread and grew even more in strength: to try and drive the budding believers away of their faith by enforcing a social and economic boycott.

For this purpose, a group of dark souls headed by Abu Jahl gathered at the quarters of Banu Qinanah, where they announced they had severed all ties with the Muslims and their protectors the Hashim clan, ranging from trade of all kinds to marriage. They penned down the pact and posted it on a wall inside the Kaabah.

By the prayer of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the hand of Mansur ibn Ikrimah, who wrote the pact, became paralyzed, causing a whisper to go around among idolaters that Mansur's misfortune was because of what they had done to the Hashim clan. (Ibn Hisham, I, 372-373; Ibn Saad, I, 208-209; Bukhari, Hajj, 45)

The embargo forced the Muslims, who until then were disseminated in various parts of Mecca, to relocate one and all into Abu Talib's quarters in order to consolidate their mutual support. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also moved there, leaving the house of Arqam.

Prepared for the worst, Abu Talib was taking all precautions against a possible assassination. For instance, after everybody went to sleep, Abu Talib would send one

of his sons or cousins to sleep in disguise in the place of the Prophet ﷺ, and have the Prophet ﷺ take his place.[200]

A period of enormous hardship had begun. Abu Jahl and his men were having the Muslim quarters monitored day and night, not allowing even a crumb of provisions to enter. All the roads that led the Muslims to marketplaces were blocked, and the goods that entered wholesale into Mecca were being monopolized by the idolaters before the Muslims could ever get their hands on them. Believers could only leave their quarters during the season of pilgrimage. Whenever a Muslim would go to a salesman in order to purchase some food for his family, it had become common for Abu Lahab, standing by the goods, to shout:

"Salesmen! Raise the prices for Muhammad and his followers so that they are unable to buy anything from you! Do not worry! I am a rich man of his word! I shall compensate your losses!"

Thus Muslims would return empty handed, without any food to calm their crying children. As for the salesmen, they would go to Abu Lahab the next morning, and he would purchase their goods for no less than the raised price.[201]

Amid this crisis, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his wife Khadijah ﷺ ended up spending all their wealth for relieving the Muslims.[202]

Despite all the measures taken by the idolaters to block the roads leading to Muslim quarters, some Meccans nonetheless were able to aid their Muslim relatives. Hakim ibn Hizam had brought a caravan of wheat from Damascus. He loaded a camel with wheat and, secretly steering it onto the beginning of the road that led to the Muslim quarters, he nudged and chased the camel. The camel fled right towards the quarters, whereupon the Muslims seized its load. On another night, in similar fashion, he sent a camel loaded with flour.

Another figure helping the Muslims was Hisham ibn Amr. Once the idolaters became aware that Hisham had sent a few camel loads of food into the quarters, they threatened him aggressively. As Hisham took little notice and continued aiding his relatives regardless, the idolaters turned to violence. He was only saved from death by the intervention of Abu Sufyan:

"Leave the man alone! He is only helping his relatives…If only we could do the same!"

200. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya,* III, 132.
201. Suhaylî, II, 127-128.
202. Yakûbî, II, 31.

Throughout this period, the Muslims had to endure great pains, forced at times to eat even the leaves of trees. Children were perishing from hunger. Their crying could easily be heard from outside of the neighborhood.

With this boycott, the idolaters aimed to starve the Muslims until they surrendered the Prophet ﷺ, which would then have given them opportunity to kill him. But having joined forces with the Abu Talib lead Hashim clan, the Muslims were determined to safeguard the Light of Being ﷺ, even if it meant shedding their last drop of blood.

Once the boycott became unbearable, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lifted his hands to the sky and prayed, "Allah…! Help us by bewildering these ruthless people with a seven-year famine like the famine of Yusuf!"

Not long after, the rains stopped, making way for a destructive drought that hit the idolaters of Quraysh hard. Many starved to death. Others, without anything to eat, began consuming the meat and skin of dead animals. From the severity of hunger, the sky had even begun to look hazy, as if it was covered in smoke.

According to Ibn Mas'ud ﷺ, the Almighty alludes to this in the Quran as follows:

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَاْتِى السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُبِينٍ. يَغْشَى النَّاسَ هٰذَا عَذَابٌ اَلِيمٌ.

"Then watch out for the day when the sky will produce visible smoke that shall overtake men. That is a painful punishment!" (ad-Dukhan, 10-11)

Once the famine became intolerable, Abu Sufyan pleaded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, "You say you have been sent as mercy, Muhammad! You enjoin obeying Allah and helping relatives. But your people are about to perish from famine! Ask Allah to relieve them! If He does through your prayers, then be sure that we will believe in Him!"

So the Noble Messenger ﷺ prayed and down poured the rain. But although the famine ended, the idolaters continued in their old ways.[203]

In the Quran, the Almighty says the following with regard to the idolaters' mindset:

وَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهٖٓ اَوْ قَاعِدًا اَوْ قَآئِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَاَنْ لَمْ يَدْعُنَآ اِلٰى ضُرٍّ مَسَّهُ كَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"And when affliction touches a man, he calls on Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove his affliction from him, he passes on as

203. Bukhari, Tafsir, 30, 44; Muslim, Munâfiqîn, 40; Ahmed, I, 431, 441.

though he had never called on Us on account of an affliction that touched him; thus that which they do is made fair-seeming to the extravagant." (Yunus, 12)

The End of the Boycott

At the end of three years of agony, the Almighty set loose a maggot on the written pact of the boycott which the idolaters had posted inside the Kaabah. Except for the words *Bismik Allahumma* (*In your Name O Allah*), the maggot ate away the entire document of cruelty and oppression. Informed through Revelation, the Prophet ﷺ disclosed the event to his uncle Abu Talib who, in turn, informed his brothers, telling them, "Wear your neatest clothes and go to Quraysh! Tell them about the fate of the pact before they find out!"

Straight after the idolaters were told of the matter by Abu Talib and his brothers, they sent a person to fetch the written pact, who brought it in the very condition the Prophet ﷺ had told them. The idolaters were frustrated. Encouraged, Abu Talib spoke out:

"Do you now understand you have done wrong and oppressed your people?"

There was not a word. Some eventually began mumbling:

"This has got to be magic!" After that they raised pretexts, once again turning their backs on the clear truth. But some Qurayshi men did begin to feel remorse for what they did and began to look for a way out. It was now the tenth year of prophethood when a few idolaters made a move to lift the boycott. Telling off Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayya was Hisham ibn Amr:

"Listen to me Zuhayr! How can you be content doing as you wish, while your uncles struggle in poverty and are prevented from even the simplest rights of trade and marriage? If you had called Abu Jahl to a pact against his uncles, I swear he would not have listened to you!"

After convincing Zuhayr, Hisham was able to win over, one by one, Mutim ibn Adiyy, Abu'l-Bakhtari and Zam'a ibn Aswad. At night, the five met at Hajun in upper Mecca to discuss the moves they were to make. They vowed to struggle until the boycott was lifted.

The next morning they went to the Kaabah. Wearing expensive clothing, Zuhayr circumambulated the Great House after which he said, "Meccans! How can it be that we can live to our heart's content while we leave the Hashim and Muttalib clans to perish? I swear to God that I shall not sit until the vicious pact that has done away with all blood ties is torn!"

Abu Jahl's protests fell on deaf ears once the four friends expressed their support, which suddenly created an encouraging atmosphere. At once, Mutim got

up and tore the pact hanging on the wall. Arming themselves, Adiyy ibn Qays, Abu'l-Bakhtari and Zuhayr headed towards the quarters of Abu Talib, making sure the Muslims returned to their homes. Thus with Divine blessing, Muslims were finally freed from the fierce three-year siege. Abu Talib read a poem in praise of those who ended the boycott. Meanwhile, the diehard idolaters had all but lost hope in ever preventing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from inviting people to Islam.[204]

In the end, such hardships served to strengthen the faith of believers and their ranks, while, as always, they added to the idolaters' misery.

In the meantime, during the course of the eight years of prophethood, the Persians had defeated the Byzantines in successive battles and laying waste to their cities had reached as far as the gates of Constantinople, forcing the humbled Byzantines to pay a hefty tribute.

As the Persians too were idolaters, the Meccans were delighted by their victory. The Prophet ﷺ was, however, left disheartened by the Byzantine defeat, the People of the Book, at the hands of the Persians. But just then the following *ayah* were revealed:

الٓمٓ. غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ. فِيٓ اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ.
فِي بِضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلّٰهِ الْاَ مْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ.
بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَٓاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ.

"The Romans have been defeated in the nearer land, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious again within a few years. Allah's is the command before and after; and on that day the believers shall rejoice in the victory of Allah; He supports whomever He pleases. And He is the Mighty, the Merciful." (ar-Rum, 1-5)

"Defeat is surely near for the Persians!" the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remarked. (Ahmed, I, 276)

Hearing the Divine news, Abu Bakr ﷺ made a wager with idolater Ubayy ibn Khalaf for ten camels that the Byzantines would defeat the Persians within three years.[205]

He then told the Prophet ﷺ of the wager, who said, "The word *bid'* actually means a period from three to ten years. So now go and increase the term and the

204. See Ibn Hisham, I, 397-406; Ibn Saad, I, 210-211.
205. The event precedes the prohibition of betting.

number of camels!" Abu Bakr ﷺ then increased the time to nine years and the amount of camels to a hundred.

The Byzantines swiftly regained strength to score a crushing victory over the Persians. Collecting the hundred camels due from Ubayy, Abu Bakr ﷺ brought them to the Prophet ﷺ, who advised him to deal them out to the poor. And he did exactly that.

The Quran's miraculous prediction led to the guidance of many idolaters.[206]

Shaqqu'l-Qamar: The Splitting of the Moon

To help them defeat the stubbornness they faced along the way, the Almighty provided His prophets carrying out the duty of inviting others onto the true path with an exceptional gift to affect people and attract them to belief. For drawing masses towards what is best for them, prophets are also given extraordinary blessings called miracles.

The miracles Prophets have been blessed with have always been in line with the skills commonly admired in their times. During the time of Musa عليه السلام, for instance, sorcery was at its peak. So Prophet Musa عليه السلام was given fitting miracles: the Staff and the Luminous Hand.[207]

During the time of Prophet Isa عليه السلام, it was medicine that had gained popularity, and doctors were highly respected in society. He was therefore blessed with a miracle that could bring even the best doctors to their knees: raising the dead.

But as the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ encompasses all ages and is valid until the end of time, his authority and influence, and the miracles in relation, are superior to all others before him. His miracles were not only applicable in the supreme fields and interests of the time like eloquence and expression, but also in various others. One of these was the Splitting of the Moon; a miracle that uplifted Muslim hearts weakened by the vicious boycott with a ray of hope and a new drive that would give the idolaters an idea of the power they were trying to defy.

This great miracle occurred amid the boycott, in the ninth year of the Meccan period. In a moonlit night, the Noble Prophet ﷺ prayed to the Almighty and the moon was split in two, one part descending on one side of Mount Abu Qubays, and the other near Mount Quayqian. But despite this awesome miracle, the idolaters still shied away from believing. Abu Jahl, as always, decried the event as magic.

206. See Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 30/3194; Qurtubî, XIV, 3.

207. The Luminous Hand or *Yad'ul-Bayda* (literally 'White Hand') was one of the nine miracles given to Musa عليه السلام. (see, al-Araf, 108; al-Isra, 101; Taha, 22; as-Shuara, 33; an-Naml, 12; al-Qasas, 32). Upon removing his hand from his bosom, everything in sight would become illumined as if the sun had appeared.

It was a show of magic, the idolaters thought, that charmed them, but surely it could not have charmed others! So they decided to ask members of the incoming caravans to Mecca whether or not they saw such a thing. To their dismay, they testified that they did.

These below *ayah* were revealed immediately following the event:

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ. وَاِنْ يَرَوْا
اٰيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرٌّ.

"The hour drew nigh and the moon did rend asunder. And if they see a miracle they turn aside and say: Transient magic. (al-Qamar, 1-2) (Wahidi, p. 418; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 54/3286)

All Meccans agreed seeing the moon split. Those with glimpses of truth in their hearts declared their belief in the Prophet ﷺ, while others, the hearts of whom remained firmly locked, continued calling him a magician.

While investigating the previous cycle of the moon's motion, even the famous French astronomer Lefrançois de Lalande (1732-1807) admitted the truth of the miracle of *Shaqq'ul-Qamar*.[208]

The underlying reasons as to why the Almighty has given miracles to his prophets could be summarized as follows:

1. To influence the masses and attract them to believing.

2. To strengthen the faith of believers and console their hearts.

3. To prove the veracity truth of prophets' call.

4. To awe Muslims and force nonbelievers to realize their weakness against Divine Power.

Enhancing the faith of the believers, each verse of the Quran yet only increases the disbelief of those the Quran declares as '*la yahdi*', those that may never be guided.[209]

208. See Zekâî Konrapa, p. 110.

209. لَا يَهْدِى meaning 'Allah does not guide'. The expression appears in exactly twenty-six verses throughout the Quran. To give just a few examples:

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِينَ

"…Allah does not guide an oppressing people."(al-Baqara, 258)

The Splitting of the Moon is a great miracle of the Prophet ﷺ. As he is also the 'Prophet of the Last Hour', his coming to the world is also among the signs of the Day of Judgment. By stating:

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ

"The Hour has drawn near and the moon was rent asunder", (al-Qamar, 1) the Quran in fact alludes to this.

The Perseverance of the Prophet ﷺ
in Inviting to Islam under all Circumstances

In spite of all the terror unleashed by his tribesmen, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not take a even a single step back in calling to the truth. He made use of the slightest opportunity to invite, using differing methods suiting the person in question.

Rukanah, perhaps the strongest wrestler among Quraysh, one day came across the Prophet ﷺ in one of the nearby valleys of Mecca. The Noble Messenger ﷺ called out to him:

"Rukanah! How long more are you going to stand against Islam and live without fearing Allah? Come…be a Muslim!"

"Only if you beat me in wrestling", Rukanah challenged.

"If I beat you, will you accept the truth of what I say?" the Prophet ﷺ asked.

"Yes. If you beat me, I will either accept Islam or give these sheep to you! But if I beat you, then you will give up your claim to prophethood!"

They began wrestling. The moment the Blessed Prophet ﷺ grabbed Rukanah, the Meccan wrestler found himself thrown on the ground. He could not even make a move.

"Let's have another go", he said enthusiastically to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

They did but he was again defeated.

"Let's go again", he told the Prophet ﷺ.

He was beaten again for the third time.

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"…Allah does not guide people of disbelief." (al-Baqara, 264)

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

"…Allah does not guide the corrupt." (al-Maida, 108)

"I swear to God you are better, a nobler man than I", Rukanah admitted as he left.

Even though he did not remain true to his promise then, Rukanah did eventually become a Muslim following the Conquest of Mecca, after which he went to Medina to settle. (Ibn Hisham, I, 418; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, II, 236)

Dimad ibn Thalabah, from the tribe Azd Shanuah, arrived in Mecca one day for pilgrimage. A man with an interest in medicine, and known to treat the mentally ill, once he heard that the idolaters call the Prophet ﷺ 'mad', he said to himself:

"I ought to go and visit this man. I might perhaps be a means of curing him." So getting up, he went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said:

"I can cure madness, Muhammad; so if you wish I can treat you. It could just be that God will cure you through me!"

The Noble Prophet ﷺ had the following to say:

"All praises are due to Allah. Only Him do we thank and from Him do we seek help and forgiveness. It is His protection we seek from the evils of our souls. Nobody shall guide whom Allah has deviated. And nobody shall deviate whom Allah has guided. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. He is One. There is no being alike Him; He has no partners. I again bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

Dimad was very much taken in by the words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. "I have never heard such beautiful words in my life. Can you please repeat what you just said?"

The Gracious Messenger ﷺ repeated his words. Dimad made him repeat them another two times, after which he remarked, "I have heard soothsayers, magicians, poets and all kinds of people, I swear…but never have I heard them say anything like your words. They are like the most precious pearls of the ocean of eloquence. Give me your hand so I can pledge allegiance."

Thus Dimad ﷺ became a Muslim.

"Can you pledge allegiance also on behalf of your tribe?" the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked.

"Certainly…I pledge allegiance on behalf of them too", he replied. (Muslim, Juma, 46; Ahmed, I, 302; Ibn Saad, IV, 241)

By making Dimad ﷺ pledge allegiance on behalf of his tribe as soon as he became Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ had effectively appointed Dimad a teacher and a representative of Islam for his tribe.

THE TENTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

The Year of Grief - The Passing Away of Khadijah ﵂ and Abu Talib

Muslim joy over being relieved of the idolater boycott did not last long, as the Prophet's ﷺ uncle Abu Talib, the protector of Muslims who took great pains in safeguarding them, passed away shortly thereafter.

On many occasions, the Noble Prophet ﷺ would insist his uncle to accept Islam, only on each occasion to have Abu Talib reply, "I know you speak the truth. But if I accept, even the women of Quraysh would condemn me!"

Having accepted the truth of the Prophet ﷺ in his conscience, he was however held back by his ego.

Even on his deathbed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ urged him to give up his soul to the Almighty in a state of belief:

"Please uncle…Just say the word so Allah will grant you eternal happiness!"

He was prevented by Abu Jahl, who was there paying a visit. As the Noble Prophet ﷺ repeated the words of *shahadah* to his uncle, Abu Jahl spoke over him, saying, "Don't you forget that you are in the religion of your ancestors!"

The last words of Abu Talib to the Messenger of Allah eventually were:

"I am breathing my last, in the religion of old. I would have accepted your words, only if I knew Quraysh would not think I changed my religion from fear of death!" (Bukhari, Janaiz 81, Manaqibu'l-Ansar 40; Ibn Saad, I, 122-123)

To these words, the Prophet ﷺ replied, with a glimmer of hope, "Still, I will always pray for your forgiveness."

He left his uncle's house in grief.

The last promise the Prophet ﷺ made to his uncle sparked the following Revelation:

اِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِی مَنْ اَحْبَبْتَ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِی مَنْ يَّشَآءُ

"Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases…" (al-Qasas, 56) (Muslim, Iman, 41-42)

Guidance is a Divine light that leads to the straight path. It only reaches those whose hearts are inclined to the Truth.

يَهْدِىٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ اَنَابَ

"…and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him)." (ar-Rad, 27)

Thus others can at best only act as a means. Guidance does not come solely through the efforts of a person, even if the person is a prophet. Despite all the efforts of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, guidance did not come to Abu Talib, simply because, even though he knew what was right, he chose not to turn to the Truth and allowed himself to fall victim to his ego.

Only thirteen days had passed since the saddening death of Abu Talib when the companion, the great support and the lifelong partner of the Prophet ﷺ and the noblest of all women Khadijat'ul-Qubra also breathed her last. For the Muslims, one grief had followed another. With a heart set in sorrow and eyes welled with tears, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ placed his wife in her resting-place with his own hands.

Throughout her life, Khadijah ؓ served as a reliable advisor and a source of comfort for the Prophet ﷺ in the way of Islam. Her passing away touched the Messenger ﷺ so much that he mourned, "Of the two disasters that have befallen this *ummah* (meaning the deaths of his uncle and wife), I do not know over which one I should grieve over more." (Yakubi, II, 35; Taberi, Tarih, II, 229)

Because of these two sorrowful losses, the tenth year of the Meccan period came to be known as the Year of Grief.

The losses of his uncle and wife now meant that the Noble Prophet ﷺ no longer had an outward support and refuge. His spiritual world was now reserved to the Almighty only. After all, it was Allah alone on whom one could rely and in whom one could trust, in the absolute sense. Besides, by losing his father, mother and grandfather at an early age, the Prophet ﷺ had already been nurtured by the Almighty.

Khadijah ؓ was an exceptionally virtuous woman. On one occasion, the Archangel Jibril came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to say:

"Khadijah is on her way to you, with a bowl of food in her hand. When she comes, pass her the peace and blessings of her Lord and mine, and give her the good

news of a palace made of pearl, awaiting her in paradise where there shall be no noise or fatigue!" (Bukhari, Manaqibu'l-Ansar, 20)

To this greeting, Khadijah responded by exclaiming:

"Allah Himself is Peace; it is from Him that peace comes, so peace unto Jibril as well! And may the peace, mercy and blessings of the Almighty be upon you, the Messenger of Allah!"

Throughout his remaining years, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ never forgot his blessed wife, showing the greatest display of loyalty to her memory.

Aisha ؓ explains:

"I have never envied another wife of the Prophet ﷺ more than I have envied Khadijah ؓ. What's more, I had never seen her. But the Prophet ﷺ would always mention her name. Like whenever he had a sheep slaughtered, he would more often than not send some parts of the meat to Khadijah's friends. On one time, unable to hold myself I said, 'As if there was nobody left on Earth except Khadijah!'

In reply, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began mentioning each of her virtues, and added, 'She was also the mother of my children.'

That was when I said to myself I will never speak ill of her again." (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar 20; Adab 73; Muslim, Fadailu's-Sahabah 74-76)

Hala bint Khuwaylid, Khadijah's ؓ sister, once asked permission to see the Prophet ﷺ. At that instant, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remembered the voice of Khadijah ؓ, and he remarked excitedly:

"O Allah! This is Khadijah's sister, Hala bint Khuwaylid!"

Seeing the excitement, Aisha ؓ, again, could not contain herself:

"Why do you keep mentioning the name of an old Qurayshi woman who is now long dead? Allah has given you better in her place!" (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 20)

It was herself that Aisha ؓ was implying with the word 'better'. Deeming her words inappropriate, the Messenger of Allah responded:

"No, Allah has not given me better. She believed me when no one else did. She trusted me when everybody else was calling me a liar. She gave me her all when everybody else backed away. And through her, Allah blessed me with children." (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 118)

The Journey to Ta'if

The ill-treatment of the Noble Prophet ﷺ increased all the more after the passing away of both his uncle and wife. The assaults, now well and truly terrible,

were trying the patience of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Seeking respite, and with Zayd ؓ by his side, he decided to journey to Ta'if, a town about 120 km away from Mecca.

There he explained Islam to the locals, calling them to *tawhid*. Having a word with their leaders, he advised them to give up worshipping idols and called them to realize they are servants of Allah ﷻ. There was virtually no person left whom the Prophet ﷺ had not spoken to.

But this call caused the eruption of a violent storm among the locals of Ta'if, who were idolaters just like the Quraysh. Caught in the mazes of their egoistic lives, not even a single person heeded the invitation. To make matter worse, they even began harassing the Gracious Messenger ﷺ.

First they mocked him, pestering him with insults. Then they lined their slaves on both sides of the streets where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would pass, and had him stoned. This severe harassment continued until the Prophet ﷺ left town. Even when he was well outside the town, the Noble Messenger ﷺ continued being pelted with stones. The feet of the Grandest of Prophets ﷺ, for the sake of whom the universe had been created, were left soaked in a pool of blood that filled his shoes. Also heavily injured was his loyal companion Zayd ؓ, who was trying to shield him with his own body, shouting:

"Don't! The man you are stoning is a Prophet!"

With difficulty, they were able to manage to make it to a garden belonging to Meccans, as they threw themselves under the shade of a date tree. The earth and the skies above were in mourning, as were the angels, Jibril, Mikail, Israfeel, Azraeel, alike.

Headed by Jibril, and with permission from the Almighty, the angels rushed next to the Prophet ﷺ:

"Say the word and we shall destroy that tribe!" they said.

But despite the vicious treatment he had received, the Prophet of Compassion ﷺ still only had good wishes in his heart, as he turned to the gates of heaven:

"Allah! I only submit to you my own vulnerability; that I have lost strength and have been ridiculed…

O the Most Compassionate! If you are not angry with me, I will not in the least worry for the troubles I have undergone!

Allah! Guide this tribe, for they do not know.

Allah! I seek your forgiveness, only for your sake!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 29-30; Haythami, VI, 35; Bukhari, Bad'ul-Khalq, 7)

Feeling for the Gracious Prophet ﷺ, the owners of the garden who were from the clan of Rabiah, sent their slave Addas to him with a bowl of grapes. Addas presented the treats:

"Please, help yourself", he said.

After saying, بِسْمِ اللهِ, 'in the name of Allah', the Blessed Prophet ﷺ began eating. The words caught the attention of Addas. He had never heard anyone utter those words before.

"Nobody around here knows or says that word", he mumbled, which he followed up by asking, "You are different from those around here. May I ask who you are?"

The Prophet ﷺ replied with a question.

"Where are you from? And what is your religion?"

"I am from Nineveh and I am a Christian".

"So you are from the town of the righteous Yunus ibn Matta…" the Messenger ﷺ commented.

Addas was now all the more amazed.

"How do you know Yunus?"

The Light of Being ﷺ replied:

"Yunus is my brother. He was a prophet and so am I".

Thereupon, the founts of faith began bursting out from the heart of Addas, and excitedly getting up at his feet, he seized the hands of the Prophet ﷺ and pronounced the words of *tawhid*. (Ibn Hisham, II, 30; Yaqubi, II, 36)

When his masters condemned him for it, Addas defended his decision, saying, "I have never met a man like him in my life. He said a word only a prophet ﷺ could have known." (Ibn Hisham, II, 31)

How fortunate Addas ؓ was to heed to the call of the Prophet ﷺ amid the most difficult times of his life and seize the honor of becoming a Muslim to comfort him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ became so happy for him that he had all but forgotten the pains he had suffered.

Today a mosque stands in memory of Addas ؓ where he accepted Islam and the garden where he treated the Noble Messenger ﷺ with grapes has been kept as it was.

A Unique Mercy and Solace from the Compassionate

Aisha ﵂ explains:

"Once I asked the Prophet ﷺ whether there had been a day where felt more distress than the Battle of Uhud.

'Yes, I suffered a lot in the hands of your tribe. The worst was what they did on the day of Aqabah.[210] Again, I sought the protection of Abdiya'lil ibn Abduqulal, who over and above rejecting me had all the troublemakers stone me until I was left in blood. So I turned back, distraught. Only when I reached Kam'us-Saalib could I come to my senses. There I looked up and saw a cloud shading me. On a closer look, I noticed Jibril in the midst of the cloud. He was calling out to me:

'The Almighty knows the way you have been treated by the tribe and how they have refused to shelter you. To do to them as you wish, he has sent you the Angel of Mountains!"

Then the Angel of Mountains greeted me and called out:

"Muhammad! Allah the Almighty has heard what the tribe has said to you. I am the Angel of Mountains. The Almighty has sent me to do to them as you command. What do you command? If you wish, I shall tumble these two mountains down on their towns!"

"No. I only wish from the Almighty that He bring forth from their children people who will only worship Him and who will not attribute to Him any partners", I replied. (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Khalq, 7; Muslim, Jihad, 111)

The following poem beautifully expresses the love of the Compassionate for His noblest servant:

So beloved are you in Divine eyes, that for you
He would sacrifice the world and what's in it.

The Ta'if journey contains many lessons:

1. First, it emphasizes the importance of inviting to Islam. Even though it was the year of grief, the Prophet ﷺ did not take any time off, carrying on his call with patience and perseverance.

210. The Day of Aqabah is the day in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood near Aqabah, in Mina, and called people to Islam. While some heeded his call, many others responded with insults. The incident was hence referred to as the Day of Aqabah thereafter.

2. Although the locals of Ta'if stoned him, the Noble Messenger ﷺ had no ill wishes for them. Together with displaying the Prophet's ﷺ compassion, this also shows that an inviter must also be compassionate.

3. A caller to Islam must be self-critical and continue praying for the guidance of others without falling into despair. Upon seeing a mistake, it was common for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to remark, as if to attribute the mistake to himself:

"What is it with me that I see you do such and such?"[211]

Again, Suleyman's عليه السلام remark upon noticing the absence of the Hoopoe during a meeting is of a similar kind:

مَا لِيَ لَآ اَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ

"What is it with me that I do not see the Hoopoe?" (an-Naml, 20)

4. The guidance of Addas following the Ta'if journey is of great importance in raising the spirits of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the most testing of times. It also shows that even when undergoing great struggles, the guidance of even a single person should provide more than enough comfort.

5. An inviter should set an example through his manners.

6. An inviter ought to be cultured and know how to interact with people, and know to say the right words at the right time, just like the Prophet's ﷺencounter with Addas.

The Jinn's Hearing of the Quran from the Noble Prophet ﷺ and their Acceptance of Islam

During the evening stopover on the return from Ta'if, a journey in which only Addas heeded the call, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited some Quran and was overheard by a group of jinn. All of them realized the truth and declared their faith in the Prophet ﷺ. They returned to their people with the duty of invitation. (Ibn Saad, I, 212)

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه further explains:

"With some companions by his side, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left with the intention of going to the Ukaz Fair.

This was when demons, from among the jinn, were prevented from eavesdropping on news coming from the heavens.[212] Those with a habit of doing so

211. See Muslim, Saaât 119; Abu Dâwvud, Khatem 4, Adab 14.

212. "The jinn used to ascend to the heavens and eavesdrop on Revelation. Upon overhearing a word, they would add to it ninety-nine words of their own. One word would remain true, while the rest would be

were even bombarded with flaming stars.[213] They thus returned to their folk empty-handed.

'Why haven't you brought any news?' they were asked.

'We found we are now prevented by a barrier placed between us and the heavens. Not only were we unable to steal any news, we were chased with flaming stars…so we had to flee!' they responded.

'This must be due to something new that has just happened. Roam East and West and come back with news', they were told.

Thus the jinn divided into separate groups and headed towards different directions. The group that went towards Tihamah stumbled across the Prophet ﷺ offering fajr salat with his Companions near Nakhlah on the way to the Ukaz Fair. Hearing the Quran, they were all ears:

'So this must be what prevents us from gathering news from the heavens!' they decided.

Then they returned to their folk. 'We have heard a wonderful Quran, which guides to the right path', they assured. 'So we believe in it and no longer will we ascribe any partners to our Lord!'

Thereupon the Almighty revealed Chapter al-Jinn, informing the Prophet ﷺ how the relevant jinn overheard him recite the Quran and the words of wisdom they conveyed to their tribe:

قُلْ اُوحِیَ اِلَیَّ اَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوٓا اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْاٰنًا عَجَبًا.

یَهْدِیْٓ اِلَی الرُّشْدِ فَاٰمَنَّا بِهٖ وَلَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَآ اَحَدًا.

"Say: It has been revealed to me that a party of the jinn listened, and they said: Surely we have heard a wonderful Quran, Guiding to the right way, so we believe in it, and we will not ascribe any partner to our Lord." (al-Jinn, 1-2) (Bukhari, Tafsir, 72; Adhan, 105; Muslim, Salat, 149; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 72/3324)

The Almighty further explains the event in Chapter al-Ahqaf as follows:

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fabricated. Once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sent as a Prophet, from then on, they were hindered from ascending to their posts in the heavens by flaming stars. Previously, no jinn had been targeted with them in the skies." (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 72/3324)

213. *Shihab*, in Arabic, which means a flare of fire, is especially used to describe the flame that appears in the skies simultaneously with a shooting star. Contemporary commentators have said that *shihab*s could signify meteors.

وَاِذْ صَرَفْنَآ اِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْاٰنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ
قَالُوا اَنْصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِىَ وَلَّوْا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ. قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَآ اِنَّا
سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا اُنْزِلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسٰى مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِٓى
اِلَى الْحَقِّ وَاِلٰى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ. يَا قَوْمَنَآ اَجِيبُوا دَاعِىَ اللّٰهِ وَاٰمِنُوا
بِهٖ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيمٍ. وَمَنْ لَا
يُجِبْ دَاعِىَ اللّٰهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ
دُونِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءُ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِى ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ.

"And when We turned towards you a party of the jinn who listened to the Quran… When they came to it, they said: Be silent! Then when it was finished, they turned back to their people to warn them. They said: O our people! We have heard a Book revealed after Musa verifying that which is before it, guiding to the truth and to a right path. O our people! Accept the Divine caller and believe in Him, He will forgive you of your faults and protect you from a painful punishment. And whoever does not accept the Divine caller, shall not escape in the earth; neither shall they have guardians besides Him, for they will be in manifest error. (al-Ahqaf, 29-32)

The Quran explains the following in relation to the barring of the jinn from eavesdropping on the heavens:

وَاَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَٓاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا.
وَاَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْاٰنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا.
وَاَنَّا لَا نَدْرِٓى اَشَرٌّ اُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اَمْ اَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا.

"And we sought to reach heaven, but we found it filled with strong guards and flaming stars. And we used to sit in some of the sitting-places thereof to steal a hearing, but he who would try to listen now would find a flame lying in wait for him; and we know not whether evil is meant for those who are on earth or whether their Lord means to bring them good." (al-Jinn, 8-10)[214]

214. The great Mawlana Rumi describes the incident by use of metaphor:
"Demons used to ascend to the skies and listen in on the secrets of the heavens.
Just as they would be about to take flight with a small number of secrets, blazing stars would drive them out of their corners.

Outwardly, the Prophet's ﷺ only gain from the Ta'if journey was the guidance of Addas ؓ. But in reality, the Compassionate Allah provided many more blessings. Included among this, for instance, is that he was given the sultanate of both worlds. First, even before he returned to Mecca, the jinn heard the Prophet ﷺ recite the Quran which inspired them to begin the call among their own people. A short time later, the Almighty was to grant His beloved the Ascension or the *Miraj*, making him the sultan of the heavens.

As the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had left Mecca with his own consent, according to Arabian custom, to return to the town he needed the protection of a Meccan. Thus on his way towards Mecca from Nakhlah, the Prophet ﷺ sent a Meccan who he came across near Mount Hira, first to Ahnas ibn Sharik, and then to Suhayl ibn Amr and Mutim ibn Adiyy, with the message:

"Will you have me under you protection until I communicate the task of prophethood given to me by my Lord?"

The first two declined. Mutim, however, accepted and the Light of Being ﷺ was able to spend the night at Mutim's house. Come morning, Mutim gathered his sons and clan around him, ordering them:

"Arm yourselves and remain on guard next to the pillars of the Kaabah!"

When they reached the Kaabah, Mutim made an announcement to the Meccans:

'A Prophet has been sent', would resonate. 'Go to where he is and acquire from him whatever it is that you want.'

'If a precious pearl is what you search, then *enter houses through their doors*!'*

'Rattle the loop of that door and wait at its threshold…for heavens provide no road for you and those like you.'

'Besides, there is no need for you to venture out onto distant journeys…for We have placed the greatest mystery of all in our servant whom We have fashioned from mud.

'If you are sincere, then go to his presence, the *Caliph* of the Divine. Even if you are a hollow cane, you shall become a cane full of sugar with his help and companionship.'"

* "*Enter houses through their doors*." (al-Baqara, 189) In the Age of Ignorance and during the first years of Islam, after donning the consecrated state (*ihram*) for pilgrimage, one would not enter his house or garden by their door. If a townsman, he would instead open a whole in the roof through which he would go in and out of his house. If a desert Arab, he would then rip open the back part of his tent, in preference to entering through the front. To do so until they were out of *ihram*, they assumed, was of great virtue and goodness. By revealing the 189th *ayah* of al-Baqarah, the Almighty proclaimed otherwise. (Wahidi, p. 56-57) The Divine expression has since come to be used as an allusion to 'doing things the right way'; and Mawlana Rumi قدس سره, here, affords a sufi commentary of the *ayah*: to find Allah, one must resort to *ahlullah*, His people, who are virtually His doors.

"Listen up, Quraysh! I have Muhammad under my protection. Nobody shall touch him!"

Mutim and his sons stood guard by the Kaabah until the Prophet ﷺ circumambulated and performed two rakahs of salat. (Ibn Saad, I, 212; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 182)

Years later, Mutim was slain at the Battle of Badr, unfortunately without the honor of being a Muslim. Following the battle, amid discussions regarding what to do with the Meccan prisoners, the Prophet ﷺ expressed his appreciation to Jubayr, the son of Mutim:

"Had your father been alive and wanted me to free the prisoners, I would have freed them without asking for the least ransom." (Bukhari, Khumus, 16, Ibn Hisham, I, 404-406)

Loyalty that extends even to a nonbeliever, for easing the path for the call of Islam, could only be an expression of supreme morals.

Meeting with Various Tribes and Inviting them to Islam

After returning from Ta'if, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept a low profile for a while. Soon after, he resumed his call, only to find the idolaters acting more brutally than ever. The Almighty then commanded the Prophet ﷺ to meet other Arab tribes and invite them to Islam.

Thus, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the opportunity provided by the months of pilgrimage to address those visiting Mecca for the fairs of Ukaz, Majannah and Zhu'l-Majaz, first reading them the Quran before extending an invitation to Islam. Members of the tribes whose camps the Messenger of Allah ﷺ personally visited to ask for assistance in carrying out the duty given to him by the Almighty included the Banu Amir, Muharib, Fazara, Ghassan, Murrah, Hanifah, Sulaym, Abs, Banu Nasr, Banu Baqqa, Kind, Kalb, Harithah, Uzra and Hudarimah.[215]

Jabir ﷺ[216] narrates:

215. See Ibn Saad, I, 216-217; Ahmed, III, 322, 492; Ibn Kathir, III, 183-190.

216. Jabir ibn Abdullah ﷺ was born in Medina sixteen years prior to the Hegira. Abdullah ibn Jabir ﷺ, his father, is the first Companion martyred at the Battle of Uhud. Forced to remain behind to look after his nine sisters, Jabir had not been able to participate in any battles while his father was alive. Following his death at Uhud, however, Jabir ﷺ took active part in nineteen battles with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was the youngest participant at the Second Aqabah Pledge. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ had great affection for him. Time and again the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would take Jabir behind him on the saddle while on camelback, and visit him while ill. Jabir ﷺ struggled to pay off the debts his father had left behind. The creditors, most of whom were Jews, were urging immediate payment. To make matters worse, there was not much harvest that year. So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had all the harvested dates piled in heaps; and with the scale in his blessed hands, he began

"During the month of pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would present himself to the pilgrims while standing at Arafa and say, 'Is there anyone who will take me to his tribe? Quraysh has prevented me from communicating the word of my Lord.'" (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 19-20/4734)

But no tribe was putting its hand up to accept the invitation to protect and assist the Prophet ﷺ. While some simply turned cold shoulders and acted rudely, others debated with the Prophet ﷺ as to why his own tribe had left him without support, when they, out of all people, knew him best. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ continued inviting them to the path of Truth regardless.[217]

Before even stepping foot inside Mecca, any pilgrim or fairgoer from the Mudar tribe, Yemen or elsewhere would be cautioned, "Don't you let the young man of Quraysh turn you away from your religion!"[218]

At some point, the Noble Prophet ﷺ went to the Thalabah clan in Mina. Once, he told them of being the Messenger of Allah, he was asked by Mafruq ibn Amr, one of their leaders:

"To what do you invite people, brother?"

With Abu Bakr ﷺ standing by his side shading him from the sun, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took a seat next to them and said the following to Mafruq:

"I invite you to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, who is One without any partners, and that I am his messenger; and also to protect and help me until I carry out to completion what I have been commanded by Allah. Quraysh has disputed the Divine command; they have denied His messenger and have preferred error over truth. But Allah stands in need of no one and deserves all the praise!"

"My brother, what else do you invite to?" Mafruq asked.

Then the Noble Prophet read aloud the following *ayah* from Chapter al-Anaam:

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repaying the creditors, one by one. Not only was Jabir's entire debt ﷺ paid back, as a Divine miracle, the dates had not decreased.

One of the *mukthirun*, the seven Companions with the most hadith narrations under their names, Jabir ﷺ narrated 1540 hadiths. He once heard about Abdullah ibn Unays narrating a hadith, about the state of people upon resurrecting from the graves; a hadith Jabir ﷺ nonetheless wished to hear firsthand. Not in the least deterred by the fact that Abdullah had long moved to Damascus, Jabir bought a camel, mounted it and departed from Medina, reaching Damascus following a month's journey where he listened to the hadith straight from Abdullah ibn Unays' mouth. Towards the end of his life, Jabir ﷺ lost his sight, finally passing away in Medina in 697 (H. 78), at the age of 94. He was the last Companion to pass away in Medina.

217. Ahmed, III, 322; Ibn Saad, I, 216.

218. Hakim, II, 681/4251.

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا اَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ اَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهٖ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓا اَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ اِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَاِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِى حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰيكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ. وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِى هِىَ اَحْسَنُ حَتّٰى يَبْلُغَ اَشُدَّهُ وَاَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَاِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبٰى وَبِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ اَوْفُوا ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰيكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ. وَاَنَّ هٰذَا صِرَاطِى مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهٖ ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰيكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

"Say: Come I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you. Do not associate anything with Him and show kindness to your parents, and do not slay your children for fear of poverty - We indeed provide for you and for them - and do not draw nigh to indecencies, apparent and concealed, and do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden except for the requirements of justice; this He has enjoined upon you that you may understand. And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner until he attains his maturity, and give full measure and weight with justice- We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability; and when you speak, then be just though it be against a relative, and fulfill Allah's covenant; this He has enjoined you with that you may be mindful. And know that this is My path, the right one, therefore follow it, and follow not other ways, for they will lead you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard against evil. (al-Anaam, 151-153)

"So, my brother, tell me; to what else do you invite?" asked Mafruq after a brief pause. "If what you have said were words of men I surely would have made them out by now."

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah quoted:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْاِحْسَانِ وَاِيتَآئِ ذِى الْقُرْبٰى وَيَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْىِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful." (an-Nahl, 90)

"My brother from Quraysh! You indeed invite to the best of morals and conduct! From what I can see, your people are slandering you in calling you a liar!" Mafruq exclaimed. Hani and Muthanna, other leaders of the clan, lent Mafruq their support. But they said they could not accept the offer until they consulted the other leaders of their tribes, stating moreover that they had made a pact of alliance with the Persians, who would not be happy if they heard of such a deal.

So even though they accepted in their consciences, the clan in the end declined the offer of the Prophet ﷺ out of fear of getting into trouble.[219]

Tariq ibn Abdullah ﷺ narrates the following:

"I once saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the Zhu'l-Majaz Fair, wearing a red shirt, calling out, 'People… Say *La ilaha illallah* and be saved!'

Behind him was another man, throwing rocks at the Messenger ﷺ, shouting in his wake, 'Do not listen to him! He is a liar!'

The stones had left the feet of the Prophet ﷺ in blood. Not knowing till then who the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was, I asked those around me.

'A young man from the sons of Abdulmuttalib', they replied.

'What about the man throwing stones?'

'His uncle Abu Lahab!'" (Hakim, II, 668; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, III, 71)

Another account of the hardships the Noble Prophet ﷺ had to endure in the way of inviting people to Islam was given by Mudrik al-Azdi ﷺ:

"I was performing pilgrimage with my father. Once we stopped over at Mina, we came across a large group.

'I wonder why they have gathered', I said to my father.

'…For the man who has abandoned the religion of his tribe!' he replied.

When I looked towards the direction my father was pointing to, I saw the Messenger of Allah. We could hear him say loud and clear, 'People, say *La ilaha illallah* and be saved!'

Some were spitting at him and throwing dirt at his face; others were hurling abuse. This continued until midday. Then a girl, whose neck was slightly exposed, came with a jug of water and a handkerchief. She was crying. The Messenger of

219. Ibn Asir, *Usdu'l-Ghâba,* V, 250-251; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya,* III, 187-189.

Allah ﷺ drank from the water, washing his hands and face. Afterward lifting his head, he said:

'Cover your neck with your headscarf, my dear. And don't ever think that they can kill or dishonour your father!'

I later found out she was his daughter Zaynab." (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, V, 130; Haythami, VI, 21)

Zaynab, Fatimah and the other daughters ﷺ of the Noble Messenger ﷺ spent their childhood and youth in the weakest days of Islam, when Muslims were subjected to the harshest treatment. Zaynab and her sisters ﷺ would always find themselves sharing the pains suffered by the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims. When their father set out from home to call people to Islam, they would either wait anxiously by the door or follow him, step by step, to ensure no harm befell him.

They were also by their father's side mourning the passing away of their dear mother Khadijah ﷺ. Never did the Prophet ﷺ undergo any hardship without his daughters shedding tears by his side. Fatimah ﷺ would be there wiping the Prophet's ﷺ blood, while Zaynab ﷺ would be in his wake with some water to wash his face. They led a difficult life indeed.

Included among the many tribes the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called to Islam at the Ukaz Fair were the sons of Amir ibn Sa'saa.

"Are you willing to give me refuge and protect me, as the Messenger of Allah, until I am able to pass on the commands of my Lord to people and complete my duty? I will not force anyone among you", he asked them.

"We will neither drive you out, nor believe you. We will only protect you until you complete your mission", they responded.

At that point a certain person from their tribe, named Bayhara, turned up. Having found out the identity of the Prophet ﷺ, he had already been thinking how he would be able to gain supremacy over the entire Arabs, if only he could win the Prophet over.

"Say we pledged allegiance to you and Allah made you victorious over your enemies, would kingship be ours after you are gone?" he impudently asked the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

"All affairs belong to Allah. He elects whomever He wishes!" the Light of Being ﷺ replied.

"So you are asking us to put our bodies inn the line of fire against all the Arabs for you and then expect us to wait and see who is given kingship if you are victorious? That's a raw deal!" Bayhara remarked, before shouting to his clan:

"I have not seen a bargain worse than yours in this entire fair. Go ahead and draw the hostility of the entire Arabs. But know that his tribe knows him best. Had they seen any goodness in him, they would have been sure to lay claim to him before you ever did!"

With the pendulum having swung his way, he then turned once again to the Prophet ﷺ:

"Leave this place immediately!"

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ got to his feet to mount his camel, the wretched Bayhara poked the camel's chest, causing the camel to spring and the Noble Prophet ﷺ to fall.

Seeing the horrific treatment of the Prophet ﷺ, Dubaa bint Amir, a Muslim woman present, screamed in a sense of urgency, "For heaven's sake, sons of Amir! How can you stand seeing the Messenger of Allah abused right in front of your eyes without moving a finger?"

Thereupon, three men stood up and disciplined Bayhara, for which they earned the good wishes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ:

"Grant them your blessings, o Allah!" he prayed.

So great were the blessings of this prayer, that not only were the three men eventually guided, they all breathed their last as martyrs.

The tribe had a leader, prevented by old age to visit Mecca for pilgrimage, who was told about the encounter by his returning tribesmen. The moment he heard what had happened, he put his hands on his head in despair, telling them off with regret:

"How on earth will you make up for such a lost opportunity? I swear to God that nobody from among the sons of Ismail has ever falsely claimed to be a prophet! How could you not see he was telling you the truth? What on earth were you thinking?"[220]

In spite of all the abuse he had to cope with, the Gracious Messenger ﷺ was meanwhile continuing to call the remainder of the other tribes at the fair to the path of truth.

Marriage with Sawdah ﵂

Sawdah ﵂ was previously married to Sakran ibn Amr ﵁. Together they were among the migrants of Abyssinia, where Sakran had passed away a short time later.

220. Ibn Hisham, II, 33-34; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 184; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isâba*, IV, 353.

Being one who had shown great loyalty and devotion to the path of Islam, Sawdah ؓ had earned the praises of the Prophet ﷺ. Thus to help her out of the troublesome situation she would face as a widow, the Prophet ﷺ took her hand in marriage.

Setting up the marriage was Hawla the wife of Othman ibn Mazun ؓ. As was the custom, Sawdah's father was asked to grant permission. As expected, he was more than happy for his daughter.

Yet, Sawdah ؓ could not find in herself the courage to go ahead with the marriage, mainly because of the five or six small children she had from her late husband.

Seeing her hesitance, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked her the reason of her doubts.

"How could I have doubt about marrying you when there is nobody in the world dearer to me? But I fear my small children will end up disturbing you with all their noise. Otherwise I am more than happy to marry you…" (Ibn Saad, VIII, 53-57; Ahmad, I, 318-319; VI, 211; Haythami, IV, 270)

The marriage took place on the tenth year of prophethood, in the month of Ramadan.

Sawdah ؓ cared enormously for the Prophet ﷺ. She became the other half of the Prophet ﷺ, always by his side at a time when he needed support the most, and took compassionate and loving care of his young daughters who were in need of tender, motherly affection.

THE ELEVENTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

The Aqabah Meeting

It was night. A group of six people from Medina, who were in Mecca visiting the Kaabah, encountered the Messenger of Allah ﷺ near Aqabah. They were instantly struck by the heavenly glow of the Prophet's ﷺ appearance, at which moment the drops of divine compassion began dripping into their hearts, bringing to life the buds of love within, giving them a joy beyond description. Meanwhile, the Light of Being ﷺ approached to offer them an invitation to Islam, just as he did with others, in accordance with his duty of prophethood.

"Shall we sit awhile and talk?" he proposed.

The six fortunate men from Medina were more than ready for the opportunity to talk to such an awe-inspiring man. Like moths drawn to a light, they quickly formed a circle around the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

Reciting some passages from the Quran, the Prophet ﷺ called them to Islam, urging them to accept the happiness of both worlds.

The Medinans had heard from their forefathers of a future prophet, of whom they were also frequently reminded by their Jewish neighbors. Thus, when they heard firsthand the call of the Prophet ﷺ, they said to one another in a sense of urgency:

"He must be the Prophet the Jews have been threatening us with. We cannot let the Jews beat us to believing him."

It only took another look at the Gracious Messenger's ﷺ glowing face, which they had admired from the first moment they had set their gazes on him, for the Medinans to wholeheartedly embrace the call. They said the *shahadah* at once.

The Prophet ﷺ then asked them whether they would help if he was to migrate to Medina with the Muslims. They replied that the long lasting hostilities between the Medinan tribes of Aws and Khazraj had reached a boiling point, owing to which they could not be of much help if the Muslims were to migrate that very year. But they asked for a year's delay to assess the situation. With the promise to pass the word of call to the Medinans, they pledged to return for pilgrimage in a year's time.

The small delegation of Medinans returned home with an entirely different air of joy. Cleansed of the dirt of ignorance, they were now relieved of a burden from

their shoulders and were feeling as light as birds. As soon as they came back to Medina, they began explaining the cause of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to the locals and inviting them to Islam, so much so that there was not a single house left in Medina in which the Noble Messenger ﷺ was not spoken about.[221]

The Third Sharh'us-Sadr: A Preparation for Miraj

On the night of Isra and Miraj - the Night Journey and Ascent to Heaven - before the Noble Prophet's ﷺ meeting with the Almighty, for the third time, his pure heart was prepared to receive divine manifestations and his chest filled with faith and wisdom.[222]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recalls the event as follows:

"I was lying down between sleep and wakefulness at Hatim, near the Kaabah. Then someone came and cleaved my chest from there to here (pointing from his throat to his abdomen while saying this) and removed my heart. A golden container was then brought, filled with faith and wisdom. My heart was washed with Zamzam water and filled with faith and wisdom, before being returned to its place." (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Khalq 6; Anbiya 22, 43; Muslim, Iman 264)

A Unique Gift to the Beloved: Miraj

The Isra took place eighteen months before the Hegira.

The Divine gift referred to as the Isra and Miraj is a transcendent blessing beyond all veils placed on mortals that surpasses all comprehension. Space and time as understood in human terms, for instance, were removed, allowing a long journey and innumerable experiences to occur within a mere split second that would otherwise take billions of lifetimes to complete.

The Almighty reveals:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِی اَسْرٰی بِعَبْدِهٖ لَیْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
اِلَی الْمَسْجِدِ الْاَقْصَا الَّذِی بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهٗ لِنُرِیَهٗ مِنْ اٰیَاتِنَا اِنَّهٗ هُوَالسَّمِیعُ الْبَصِیرُ

"Glory be to Him Who made His servant go by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts we have blessed, so that We may show to him some of Our signs. Surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing." (al-Isra, 1)

221. See Ibn Hisham, II, 38; Ibn Saad, I, 219; Haythami, VI, 40.
222. See Bukhari, Salat, 1; Muslim, Îman, 263.

To draw attention to the importance and wonder of the event it is soon to express, the verse begins with a glorification (*tanzih*). Commentators hold that the word سُبْحَانَ (*subhane*) clears the Almighty of all deficient attributes, used also to express astonishment in the face of the miraculous doings of the Creator. As such, it is also one of the most important words used to remember the Almighty.

In short:

1. The word praises and affirms the miraculous Isra and lays the groundwork for the purification of hearts, protecting it from the fancies of likening Allah ﷻ, to creation.

2. It emphasizes that the Almighty is remote from deficient attributes of any kind, especially for those who deem the *Miraj* impossible.

The verse goes on to draw attention to night. Isra was a night journey. Most of the Revelation came at night time. Again, it is the night in which groundbreaking events, whether good or bad, take place. Likewise the pre-dawn is the time of the *tahajjud* salat, a voluntary yet a peak act of worship.

As for the blessings of the Farthest Mosque, or Masjid'ul-Aqsa, and its surroundings, commentators have referred to them as:

1. The blessings of both the world and the hereafter. The Mosque is surrounded by greenery and rivers.

2. It has been the home of many prophets and hence has been blessed over and over with divine revelation.

3. The further blessings it has received through being a destination for the Isra.

During this journey, Allah ﷻ, made His messenger witness many extraordinary events.

That night at Masjid'ul-Aqsa, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ led the salat before the entire host of prophets.[223]

Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates that on the night of Isra, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was brought two bowls, one of wine, the other of milk. After a momentary look, the Prophet ﷺ chose the bowl of milk, upon which Jibril said, "Praise be to Allah who has guided you to that which suits man's reason for existence. Had you chosen the

223. Ibn Saad, I, 214.

bowl of wine, your nation would have deviated." (Muslim, Iman 272, Ashribah, 92)[224]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thus representing the whole of his *ummah*, as their source of inspiration. Milk stood for natural disposition (*fitrah*), while wine stood for love of the world.

The Quran states:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى

"…Nor does he speak out of desire" (an-Najm, 3) whereby the Almighty informs us that the Noble Prophet ﷺ never did anything of his own doing.

Allah, glory be unto Him, is the Absolute Doer, and thus the Prophet ﷺ had submitted completely to Him. Here, by making him prefer milk, the Almighty guided His Messenger to the greatest virtue. This event depicted in the hadith also hints at the supreme blessing upon the ummah of the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

Taken from the Masjid'ul-Haram to the Masjid'ul-Aqsa with the night walk referred to as *Isra*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was honored with ascension to the heavens, the Miraj. Guided by the Archangel Jibril, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went as far as the *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*, the Lote-Tree.

The Noblest of Creations ﷺ recounts the experience as follows:

"I was at Hatim, by the Kaabah, between sleep and wakefulness, when Buraq, an animal larger than a donkey yet smaller than a mule, was brought to me. With its forelegs, it could leap as far as it could see. I was mounted on it. Jibril led us to the nearest heaven and asked for its gates to be opened.

'Who is it?' a voice asked from behind.

'Jibril'.

'Who is with you?'

'Muhammad'.

'Has he been delivered the invitation of *Miraj*?'

'Yes!'

'In that case welcome...How wonderful a visit!'

224. Also see Bukhari, Tafsir 17/3, Ashriba 1, 12; Nasâî, Ashriba, 41.
That Islam is a religion of natural prediposition was confirmed with the *Isra* and *Miraj*, testifying that the books of heavens shall never be disclosed to the spiritually corrupt, ailing with the diseases of the heart.

The gates were then opened. When we passed through, I saw a man waiting. 'This is your father Adam. Greet him!' it was said. I greeted him. He responded, after which he spoke:

'Welcome, virtuous son, virtuous Prophet!'

Then Jibril elevated me to the second heaven. There I saw Yahya and Isa ﷺ, the two maternal cousins.

I was further raised to the third heaven, where I saw Yusuf ﷺ. And afterward to the fourth, where I saw Idris ﷺ, then to the fifth where I saw Harun ﷺ, and finally to the sixth, in which Musa ﷺ was waiting.

'Virtuous brother, virtuous Prophet…Welcome!' he said.

But after we passed him, he began weeping.

'Why do you weep?' he was asked.

'I weep because the young man who became prophet after me will have more of his followers enter Paradise than mine!"[225]

Then Jibril took me to the seventh heaven, where we saw yet another man.

'Greet your father Ibrahim!' Jibril said.

I greeted him to which he replied:

'Virtuous son and virtuous Prophet…Welcome!' he said, before continuing, 'Send my greetings, Muhammad, to your followers and let them know of the beauty of the soil of Paradise, the sweetness of her waters, and the vastness of her land. But tell them to plant more trees here. The trees of Paradise are planted merely through saying, '*Subhanallah wa'l-hamdu lillah wa la ilaha illallahu wallahu Akbar*' (Glory and thanks are for Allah; there is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest)'.

I was then raised to a Tree, whose fruits were as huge as the Hejr pots of Yemen, and leaves like elephant ears.

'And this…is the Sidrat'ul-Muntaha', Jibril uttered.

There flowed four rivers; two inward and two outward.

'What are these called, Jibril?' I asked.

225. Musa's ﷺ weeping should not be understood as caused by jealousy, but rather from sorrow caused by not being able to attain that state of perfection.

'The two inward rivers belong to Paradise. As for the outward ones, one is the Nile and the other the Euphrates'"[226] (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Khalq, 6; Anbiya, 22, 43' Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 42; Muslim, Iman, 264; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 94; Da'wat, 58; Nasai, Salat, 1; Ahmad, V, 418)

It follows that upon reaching the Sidrat'ul-Muntaha, Jibril said:

"From this point onward, Messenger of Allah, you are on your own!"

"Why, Jibril?" asked the Prophet ﷺ.

"The Almighty allows me passage only up to this point. If I take a single step further, I will burn to ashes!" (Razi, XXVIII, 251)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ continued the rest of the journey on his own. He was blessed with extraordinary manifestations, and honored above all with the vision (*jamal*) of the Almighty.

To properly describe these amazing experiences in words is as impossible as trying to reduce a truth beyond imagination to the level of human comprehension. The manifestations, whose true nature remains an eternal secret between the Almighty and His Beloved, took place strictly within the conditions of the supersensible world, *alam'ul-ghayb*.

With that said, these magnificent secrets manifested between the Glorious and His Noble Prophet display the boundless blessings of the Creator to those who receive His revelations.

The *Miraj* also carried the Divine aim of ridding the sorrow that had filled the Prophet's ﷺ heart following the cruelties he endured at Ta'if, to make room for happiness.

Since the *Miraj* took place beyond space and time, it is impossible for human understanding to completely grasp this Divine manifestation. Forcing the imagination in hope of grasping such delicate and unique matters is strongly advised against.

Once in the dimensionless realm of the Almighty during the Miraj, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with an exceptional Divine gift that surpassed all those given to previous prophets, experienced a manifestation described as:

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى

226. According to one view, the witnessing of the Nile and Euphrates in Paradise by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is an allusion to Islam flourishing on Earth and becoming sovereign over the fertile lands through which the Nile and the Euphrates flow, by which those regions will be saved from the fire worshipping of the Persians and Trinity doctrine of the Byzantines; and for generations to come, the dwellers of these areas will become the flagbearers of *tawhid* and lend an invaluable service to Islam.

"So he was at the measure of two bows or closer still." (an-Najm, 9)

Remembering that despite being among the great prophets, experiencing only an inkling of this manifestation was enough to make Prophet Musa ﷺ faint, one can get an idea of the sublime rank of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ next to Allah, the Glorious, and the special authority and power he was given.

In the sacred valley, for his feet to share in the blessings of the site and participate in that honor, Prophet Musa ﷺ was asked to remove his shoes. But at the Night of *Miraj*, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was in a sense told to:

"Walk on the covering of the Highest Heaven with your shoes, so that the Heaven is honored with their dust, and that the light of the Heaven is blessed with your presence ." (Bursawi, V, 370)

Poet Kemal Edib Kürkçüoğlu gives an elegant voice to the excitement of the heavens over the ascension of the Prophet ﷺ:

At the night of Miraj, for staring at his face,
To the ground, in gratitude, the heavens fall prostrate…

Below is the Almighty's description of the *Miraj*:

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَى

"By the Star when it goes down…" (an-Najm, 1)[227] The chapter begins with an oath to emphasize the truth of the Miraj against the possible denials of the nonbelievers. This is supported by what follows after the vow:

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوٰى. وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى. اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا وَحْىٌ يُوحٰى.
عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوٰى. ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوٰى. وَهُوَ بِالْاُفُقِ الْاَعْلٰى.

"…Your Companion is neither astray nor being misled; Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed. He was taught by one Mighty

227. The commentators have provided various explanations regarding the star (*an-najm*) by which the Almighty swears. Among the most significant of these is the interpretation that 'the star' is the Blessed Messenger ﷺ himself or the gradually revealed verses of the Holy Quran. In light of this, the meaning of the oath is:
    1. By Muhammad Mustafa, who ascended upon and descended down the *Miraj*!
    2. By the time of the disclosure of each Divine dispensation during the revelation of the Quran!

in Power, endowed with Wisdom: for he appeared, in a stately form, while he was in the highest firmament." (an-Najm, 2-7)

The word *istiwa,* translated as 'appearance in a stately form' above, literally means to cover, to encompass or to straighten up. Together with the consideration that it is Jibril عليه السلام who is the subject of the verb, the majority of commentators tend to instead attribute the verb to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in which case it highlights the highness of his value and rank. So the Prophet ﷺ straightened up at the highest horizon and:

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلّٰى

"Then he approached and came closer…" (an-Najm, 8) That is to say, as a result of Divine attraction, the Noble Prophet was drawn higher; even higher than the rank where he was.

Thus, during the Miraj, the Prophet ﷺ not only aligned to the highest horizon, he also drew nearer to the Allah ﷻ. Then the affect of divine attraction increased more and more, until the Prophet ﷺ suddenly passed to the other side of the highest horizon:

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى

"So he was the measure of two bows or closer still." (an-Najm, 9)

قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى 'The measure of two bows or closer' is a simile used to express a supersensible reality in sensory terms. It has reference to a common practice among Arabs before the coming of Islam. The custom was that whenever two parties made an agreement on a matter, each party would take out a bow, and placing them jointly on top of one another, would shoot a single arrow with the two bows. This acted as a symbol of solidarity, indicating that whatever one liked from then on so would the other, and reason for one's anger would also serve as reason for the other's.

Thus comprising both physical and spiritual closeness, *qaba qawsayn*, or the measure of two bows, is a sublime reality that surpasses human comprehension. The Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ got so close to his Lord at that instant that all mediums ceased to be, and in a direct fashion:

فَاَوْحٰٓى اِلٰى عَبْدِهٖ مَآ اَوْحٰى

"…He revealed to His servant what He revealed…" (an-Najm, 10)

What is meant by this 'revealing' has been explained as:

1. Salat. One of the most important aspects of the Miraj is that it was then that the five daily salats were made obligatory. With the advise of Prophet Musa ﷺ, the Noble Prophet ﷺ kept on insisting the Almighty, as a result of which the number of daily salats, fifty to begin with, were dropped to five. With this, however, the Allah ﷻ, promised to reward a single deed with ten rewards, hence the reward of fifty salats in return for the five. Afterward, Allah, glory be to Him, added:

"Whoever intends to do a good deed but cannot, shall still receive a reward for his good will. If he does, then he will have ten rewards recorded in his name.

And whoever intends to commit something bad, but does not, shall reap no sin. If he does commit it, he will be imputed that one sin!" (Muslim, Iman, 259)

Owing to the repeated pleas of the Prophet ﷺ, the Almighty decreased the number of daily salats, fifty to begin with, to five, as is explained in a lengthy hadith. What this means is that although the rights of the Creator, or *huququllah*, in fact require man to worship Him fifty times a day, being boundlessly merciful, the Creator has relieved man of nine tenths of this responsibility. Considering the *ayah*:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I have created the jinn and men only that they might worship Me" (az-Zhariyat, 56) declares that the essential activity for mankind is to worship the Creator, it could be understood that the amount of this responsibility has been reduced in consideration of the generally weak nature of man; yet it also means that although it is not obligatory, there is more than good reason, for those who can, to voluntarily offer more salats, which is not prohibited by any means.

In addition to the five obligatory daily salats, and as the natural outcome of what has been explained above, mature believers offer voluntary salats like the *ishraq* and *awwabin*, and give special importance to getting up at night for *tahajjud*. But in order for these voluntary acts of worship to be performed only by those with the zest and power to do so, with the repeated pleas of the Prophet ﷺ, the obligatory salats were in the end reduced to five a day from the fifty they were to begin with.

2. The Prophet ﷺ was given the promise that:

"No Prophet before you and no followers before your followers shall enter Paradise!" (Razi, XXVIII, 248)

3. The final two verses of Chapter Baqarah were revaled.

A hadith narrated by Muslim states that:

"During the Miraj, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given three blessings: the five daily salats, the ending of chapter Baqarah and the good news that the major sins of his followers, except for *shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah) would be forgiven…" (Muslim, Iman, 279)

That said, only Allah ﷻ, and His Messenger know the nature of the said 'revelation' of Miraj.

What is obvious here however is that Prophet ﷺ witnessed the manifested experiences of *Miraj*, not as a dream, but as a reality supported by the certainty in his heart. That is:

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَاٰى. اَفَتُمَارُونَهُ عَلٰى مَا يَرٰى.

"The heart lied not in seeing what it saw. Now will you dispute with him as to what he saw?" (an-Najm, 11-12)

Upon returning from the *Miraj*, from that unique post to which no man can attain, where he met his Lord and underwent many extraordinary experiences, the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibril عليه السلام where he had left him, once again, in his true form, near the *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*.

وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخْرٰى. عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهٰى.

"For indeed, he saw him at a second descent; near the Lote Tree beyond which none may pass." (an-Najm, 13-14)

The *ayah* hints at the higher rank of the Prophet ﷺ in comparison with Jibril عليه السلام. Indeed, Jibril عليه السلام had to remain at the spot where he remarked 'only a step further and I will burn', while the Prophet ﷺ was able to go further. This is made all the more clear by the Prophet's encounter again with Jibril عليه السلام on the way back.

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَاْوٰى. اِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشٰى.

"Near it is the Garden of Refuge, when that which shrouded did enshroud the Lote Tree." (an-Najm, 15-16)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was later asked what he saw that enshrouded the *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*.

"I saw it enshrouded by golden moths, with an angel seated on each of its leaves invoking Allah." (Tabari, XXVII, 75; Muslim, Iman, 279)

Ibn Abbas ﷺ commented that the Almighty rewarded Musa ﷺ by talking to him, Ibrahim ﷺ by befriending him, and Muhammad ﷺ by the honor of Divine vision, in a way whose nature remains unknown to us. (Tabari, XXVII, 64)

For eyes to be fixed unswervingly on the Beloved is the peak of *adab*, that is to say, courtesy.

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغٰى. لَقَدْ رَاٰى مِنْ اٰيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرٰى.

"His sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong; for truly he did see the Greatest of the Signs of his Lord!" (an-Najm, 17-18)

As understood by these *ayah* of the Quran, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was allowed to pass beyond the *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*, beyond which no being, including Jibril ﷺ had passed before. Taking place there was a union, described simply as 'the measure of two joined bows or closer', whose true nature however remains forever hidden from human understanding.

During this union, the Sultan of Prophets ﷺ stood witness to realities too great for words to articulate, and saw the splendid signs of the lordship of the Almighty, and the grandeur of His majesty that could only be attained through inner experience, that is *mushahadah* or witnessing.

The interpretation of most commentators here is that the Noble Prophet ﷺ saw the Almighty with the eye of the heart. (Tabari, XXVII, 63)

Narrated by Ibn Abbas ﷺ, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is known to have said:

"I indeed saw Him, the Almighty!" (Ahmad, I, 285; Haythami, I, 78)

In another instance, upon being asked whether he saw the Almighty during the Miraj, the Messenger of Allah replied:

"I saw a Light!" (Muslim, Iman, 292)

Only Allah, glory be to Him, knows the essence of the matter.[228]

We have many narrations from the Prophet ﷺ regarding his experiences during the Isra and Miraj, some of which we shall mention now.

228. We have drawn from Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır's *"Hak Dîni Kur'ân Dili"* in explaining the *ayah* concerning the *Miraj*.

During the Miraj, the Prophet ﷺ saw a group who had swollen lips, like camels. Standing over them were officials given the duty of cutting their lips and stuffing their mouths with stones.

"Who are they, Jibril?" asked the Prophet ﷺ.

"They are those who used to unjustly seize the properties of orphans", Jibril replied. (Tabari, XV, 18-19)

Afterwards, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ encountered another group, digging their copper nails into their own faces and chests.

"Who might they be?" the Prophet ﷺ again asked.

"They are those who through gossiping and backbiting used to mess about with the honor and dignity of others." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 35/4878)

Soon afterward, the Noble Messenger ﷺ also saw the fornicators on earth wretchedly eating away at carcass, the usurers afflicted with swollen guts, and women who had murdered the children they had conceived through fornication, miserably hung from either their breasts or upside down from their feet.[229]

It is for such reasons the Light of Being ﷺ once remarked:

"If you knew what I know, you would surely laugh less and cry more." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 5/12)

Again, regarding one of his visions during the *Miraj*, the Gracious Prophet ﷺ once said, "On the night of Miraj, I saw the Gates of Paradise inscribed with the words:

'*Charity shall be rewarded tenfold but loans eighteenfold*'.

'Why is giving loans superior to giving charity?' I then asked Jibril.

'…Because one who asks for charity more often than not asks despite having money. But one who seeks a loan seeks it out of need.'" (Ibn Majah, Sadaqat, 19)

In another hadith, the Prophet ﷺ recounts:

"During the *Miraj*, I paused at the Gates of Paradise and looked inside. Its dwellers were mostly the poor, while the rich were detained for questioning. Those judged to enter hellfire were then commanded to be taken away. Then I paused at the Gates of Hell. Most of its dwellers were women." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 51; Muslim, Zuhd, 93)

The hadith serves as a caution, especially for women, to protect themselves from behavior that could lead them to Divine punishment.

229. See Tabari, XV, 18-19.

While on the subject of *Miraj*, we must touch upon another matter, that is to say, even though human beings can only think of past recollections to the extent allowed by the Almighty, prophets are endowed with knowledge of the present and future, in addition to the past. The Prophet's ﷺ informing of the circumstances of the hereafter in the 'past' tense, is thus simply a demonstration of this fact.

In fact in the miraculous night of *Miraj*, in which he was relieved of all past, present and future limitations, the Prophet ﷺ gazed at forthcoming events of great consequence, expressing them in the 'past', as if they had already happened. One of these is about Abdurrahman ibn Awf ﷺ of the *Ashara Mubashshara*, one of the Ten Promised with Paradise while still alive.

"That night I saw Abdurrahman crawling on all fours entering Paradise.

'Why are you coming so slowly?' I asked him.

'Due to the greatness of my wealth, I was subjected to such hardships that would have made toddlers turn gray. So much so that at one stage I thought I would never see you again…" (Muhammad Parsa, Faslu'l-Khitab, p. 403)

It was only after the Hegira to Medina, where he became rich that Abdurrahman ibn Awf ﷺ heard about this. Without further ado, he quickly went to Aisha ﷺ to ask whether the Prophet ﷺ had really said such words. Upon receiving a positive response, Abdurrahman ﷺ was so ecstatic that he gave away his caravan, which had just arrived from Damascus loaded with goods, in charity for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet ﷺ indeed stood witness to numerous Divine signs in the course of the *Miraj*. One hadith even states, "I ascended so high that I could hear the squeaking of the pens (of destiny)." (Bukhari, Salat, 1)

That is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was taken to such a high post that he could hear the sounds of the pens recording the destiny of the universe and gain acquaintance with realities beyond comprehension.

Judging from the above hadiths, it is obvious that during the Miraj, the Prophet ﷺ was virtually living the past, the present and the future intertwined, all at once.

A Few Subtle Points from the Miraj

1. Right before the Noble Prophet ﷺ embarked on the journey, there was the *sharh'us-sadr*. This indicates that a spiritual ascension requires a pure heart, in which nothing but the Divine light resides. Only after the heart is rid of its density will the manifestations of Divine secrets make their way.

2. The Isra simply exhibits the eternal power and majesty of the Almighty in carrying His servant through a unique journey.

3. Another point is that having been granted following the painful and distressing journey of Ta'if, the Miraj was an indication of better days to come.

4. All the obligatory deeds made mention in the Quran were delivered through Jibril ﷺ. But as an exception, salat was commanded directly by the Almighty during the Miraj. This hints at a different kind of mystery in salat and its exceptional importance among other deeds.

Salat is indeed the pillar of religion. The maturation awaiting there is to be found in no other act. The rank of salat among other acts of worship is like the rank of the vision of the Almighty as compared to other blessings of the Hereafter. Insofar as salat is the *Miraj* of Believers, the moment in which servants are closest to the Lord are those in which they perform salat in deep submission and concentration. Salat is where the servant meets his Creator while still in this life. It is owing to such reasons that the Prophet ﷺ said that 'salat was the light of his eye'[230], urging his followers even in his final breath 'to hold fast to' the primary deed of worship.[231]

5. The opening of the gates of heavens for the Noble Prophet ﷺ during the *Miraj* showed that his prophethood was not confined to Mecca and Ta'if, but that he was the Prophet of the Universes, whose mission extended to the whole world and even to the heavens beyond.

6. The *Miraj* marks the final point of maturity for man, showing the final border of spiritual perfection a human being could ever attain to.

7. As a journey from the Masjid'ul-Haram to the Masjid'ul-Aqsa in Jerusalem, the *Isra* reinforces the already strong ties between these two great spiritual centers, which were blessed with being home to numerous prophets in history. Also expressed through the journey is that encompassing all heaven-sent religions before it, Islam is the only remaining true religion in the sight of the Almighty. Another indication of this is the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ leading of the entire prophets in salat at the Masjid'ul-Aqsa.

The Reception of Miraj

When time came to tell the Meccan idolaters of the *Isra* and *Miraj*, the Noble Messenger ﷺ voiced his worries to Jibril عليه السلام:

"But my tribe will not believe me!"

"Abu Bakr will. He is the *Siddiq* (the Confirmer)", Jibril ﷺ assured. (Ibn Saad, I, 215)

230. Nasâî, Ishratu'n-Nisa, 1.
231. See Abû Dâwûd, Adab, 123-124.

Once they heard of it, the idolaters refused offhand to accept the Miraj. Making the most of the opportunity, they began spreading a storm of rumors around the town, in hope of turning Muslims away from their faith by questioning the credibility of the Prophet ﷺ. They even went to Abu Bakr ؓ, who to their dismay however, responded with an unshakeable loyalty to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

"Whatever he says is right…for there is no chance of him lying! I will believe without hesitation in whatever he says!"

"So you really think that he went to Masjid'ul-Aqsa and back in a single night?" the idolaters asked mockingly.

"Yes…What's there to be surprised about? Greater still, he tells me he receives news from the Almighty every day and night…and I still believe him."

Afterward, Abu Bakr ؓ went next to the Prophet ﷺ, by the Kaabah at the time, and listened to the experiences from first hand, to which he remarked:

"You speak the truth, Messenger of Allah!"

Made joyous by Abu Bakr's reaction, the Prophet ﷺ said with a smile with enough glow to light up the entire universe:

"You are indeed the *Siddiq*, Abu Bakr!"

From that day on, Abu Bakr ؓ came to be known as the *Siddiq*.

The remainder of the Companions also followed in the footsteps of Abu Bakr ؓ in confirming the Noble Prophet ﷺ regarding the *Miraj*.

Unable to confound the believers, the idolaters this time resorted to testing the Prophet ﷺ. They interrogated him regarding Masjid'ul-Aqsa. The Almighty then presented a vision of the Sacred Temple before the eyes of the Prophet ﷺ, gazing at which he answered one by one the questions posed by the idolaters. (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 41; Tafsir, 17/3; Muslim, Iman, 276)

Still unconvinced, the idolaters then posed another question.

"Then tell us, Muhammad, about the caravan of ours we are expecting from out of town, about which we do care more than we ever cared about Masjid'ul-Aqsa!"

"I stumbled upon the caravan of so and so clan over at that valley. Frightened by the growl of a wild beast, a camel of theirs had run away. I showed them where it was…

And near Dajnan, I saw the caravan of the clan. The men were asleep. They had a bottle full of water, which they had topped with a cover. I lifted the cover and had a drink. Then I put it back over the bottle, leaving it as it was before. The caravan

should now be heading down the Tanim slope from Bayda. Leading the caravan is a brownish male camel, carrying two sacks, one black and the other spotted."

Dazzled by the response they received, the idolaters exclaimed, "By Lat and Uzza, this will decide whether he says the truth!" Hoping to find inconsistency in the words of the Prophet ﷺ, they rushed to the Tanim slope and waited for the caravan. Not long after the caravan became visible from a distance, they remarked, dejected:

"There is the caravan…led by a brownish camel!"

Upon an even closer inspection, the found the camel was exactly as it had been described. They then asked the caravan members of the water bottle the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had described. They confirmed that they had a bottle full of water under cover, which they found emptied some time later.

On a side note, that the Prophet ﷺ had a drink of water is one indication that the *Isra* and *Miraj* was a journey both physical and spiritual.

The idolaters then asked the other group of the runaway camel.

"That's true! We were shaken by a growl in that valley, upon which a camel of ours fled. Someone then began calling us to the camel. We found the camel right where he told us and seized it!"

Some of them even said that they had recognized the voice as "Muhammad's".

There was not a single question that the idolaters had left unasked to the Noble Prophet ﷺ, from the amount of camels in the caravan to the number of shepherds. The Prophet ﷺ answered each of them correctly, as just like Masjid'ul-Aqsa, the caravan had also been brought to his gaze. But those with hearts locked to the truth continued in their stubborn ways and merely remarked, "This has got to be magic!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 10; Ibn Sayyid, I, 243; Haythami, I, 75; Bayhaqi; Dalail, II, 356)

The Almighty declares:

اَفَعَيِينَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْاَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِى لَبْسٍ مِنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

"Were We then fatigued with the first creation? Yet they are in doubt with regard to a new creation." (Qaf, 15) What could be easier for the Glorious Allah, who has created everything out of nothing, than to raise His servant to the Isra and Miraj? Only a lack of common sense could explain why one deigns not to accept this.

Again, the pitiable idolaters of Mecca had balked at believing the Isra, once again making fun of the Prophet ﷺ. But now their inappropriate behavior was to forever cost them the blessing of having the Noble Prophet ﷺ nearby. Time had now come to take this blessing away from the Meccans who never knew how

to appreciate it. Instead, they chose to go too far in their ungrateful and unjust treatment of a Prophet, for whose sake they had been created in the first place.

There was really one thing left to do: For Allah ﷻ, to take the Noble Messenger ﷺ away from them and award him to another people who could better appreciate such a blessing.

Indeed, not long after the fateful journey of Ta'if, the Almighty had already sent to His Beloved Messenger ﷺ the forerunners of an exceptional people longing to pledge allegiance to him.

THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH YEARS OF PROPHETHOOD

The First Aqabah Pledge

The six Medinans who had embraced Islam during their trip to Mecca the previous year turned up again a year later, with another six by their side. Aqabah once again served as the meeting spot.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ invited the six newcomers to *tawhid*. Having already heard from their friends of the beauty and greatness of Islam and the nobility of the Prophet ﷺ, they too embraced the faith.

Unlike the first meeting, this time the visitors formally pledged allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ. Clasping the hand of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Medinans gave their first vows, for which reason this meeting has come to be known as the First Aqabah Pledge.

The Medinans pledged the following:

1. Not to ascribe any partner to Allah ﷻ, under any condition.

2. Not to steal.

3. Not to even approach fornication.

4. Not to bury their daughters alive.

5. Not to slander.

6. To obey Allah and His Messenger. (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 43)

A vow to rid the entire Arabian peninsula of idolatry, oppression and the evil practices rampant at the time, the Medinans' first pledge is thus a turning point in the history of Islam.

The Appointment of Musab ibn Umayr as Teacher and the Conquest of Medina through the Quran

The new Muslims of Medina wrote a letter to the Prophet ﷺ, asking him to send them a teacher to explain Islam to them, teach them the Quran and lead them in salat. So the Prophet ﷺ sent Musab ؓ.[232]

232. Ibn Saad, I, 220.

To teach Medinans the Quran, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had also sent Abdullah Ibn Ummi Maktum ؓ, one of the first believers along with Musab ibn Umayr ؓ.[233]

Musab ibn Umayr ؓ had embraced the guiding light at a very young age, holding firm to his belief despite the tyranny of his family who went so far as to deprive him of his inheritance. Though outwardly he may have been left poor and deserted, inwardly, he had a rich heart filled with the love and delight of *iman*. In spreading Islam, he was like a pillar of passion.[234]

Indeed, the coming of Musab ؓ to Medina marked the beginning of the blooming of Islam in the town. Entrusted by the Prophet ﷺ with the duty of communicating Islam, the young companion began working night and day to explain to people the word of the Almighty. His host and main helper was Asad ibn Zurara ؓ, one of the fortunate first to be guided through the efforts of Musab ؓ.

On one instance with Musab by his side, Asad went and sat by the well at the garden belonging to the Zafar clan. Saad ibn Muadh, a notable from the family of Abdul'Ashal, took the opportunity to voice his displeasure to Usayd ibn Hudayr:

"You are a man who knows what to do. You do not need anyone helping you. Go and tell those men, who have come to our neighborhood to corrupt the faith of the weak men among us, to leave and never come back! I would have done it myself only if Asad had not been my relative."

Fired up, Usayd quickly went to the two men with a spear and vented his anger.

"What are you doing here? Have you brought this man next to you, Asad, to corrupt the faith of the weak among us? If you wish to live, leave now and don't turn back!"

A prudent man, Musab ؓ kept his nerve and asked:

233. Bukhari, Manaqıbu'l-Ansâr, 46.

234. Ali ؓ explains:
"We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the Masjid. Musab then arrived, wearing nothing but a mantle patched all over with pieces of wool. Seeing him reminded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of Musab's prosperous days in Mecca; and witnessing his current condition reduced the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to tears. He then said:
'What will become of you when you will wear one beautiful garment in the morning, another in the afternoon, when you will be served with one full plate after another, when you will adorn your houses with drapes just like the Kaabah is draped!'
'Most certainly, Messenger of Allah, our condition then will be much better than it is now' they said. 'For then we will not have to worry about our livelihood and be able to commit ourselves entirely to worship'.
'Quite the reverse…You are in a much better position now than you will be then', the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated." (Tirmidhi, Qiyamat, 35/2476)

"Will you not sit awhile and listen to what I have to say? You look like an intelligent man…If you like my words you will accept, and if not you won't."

"Quickly say what you have to say", answered Usayd. Thrusting his spear into the ground, he sat down. Musab ﷺ explained Islam to him, reciting some Quran.

As soon as he heard the recital of the Quran, before he could even speak, Usayd's face became lit with the light of Islam and his heart melted to the truth.

"What marvelous words…[235] What does one who wants to enter this religion do?" he asked.

On the instruction of Musab and Asad ﷺ, Usayd washed himself and his clothes and then pronounced the *shahadah*. After performing two rakats of salat, he said:

"There is one man I have left behind. If he accepts your words everybody will follow in his wake. His name is Saad ibn Muadh. I will send him to you at once!"

Before long, Saad came hastily next to them. But he too, like Usayd, ended up embracing Islam after hearing Musab talk. Afterwards, he returned to his people:

"Sons of Abdul'Ashal! How have you known me until now?"

"As our leader and our wisest", they replied.

"Then know that I will not speak to any men or women among you until you believe in Allah and His Messenger!"

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235. Usayd ﷺ never ceased to recite the Divine Words, the beauty of which he recognized the very first moment, with the same love and enthusiasm throughout his life. He himself explains:
"I was reading Chapter Baqarah one night. My horse was next to me, tied. But at one stage the horse began to rear up. I stopped reading and the horse calmed down. I continued to read, but again, the horse began to rear up excitedly as I read. Fearing he might be trampled under the horse's hooves, I was forced to bring my little son Yahya closer to me. But then I looked up to the sky and saw spots that looked like lamps, which after a while, rose further up into the sky and disappeared from sight. In the morning, I told the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of the experience.
'Read Usayd, read,' he said to me before asking, 'Do you know, Usayd, what those things were that you saw?'
'No', I replied.
'They were angels who had come to listen to your recital of the Quran. Had you continued reading, they would have listened to you until daybreak. They would not have remained secret to other people either, who would have been able to see them freely.'" (Bukhari, Fadail'ul-Quran, 15)
Aisha ﷺ recounts:
"Usayd ibn Hudayr ﷺ was one of the most virtuous Companions. I remember, he used to continually say:
'Had I been able to continuously sustain the state of mind that overtook me in either one of these three moments, I surely would have been Paradise bound: while reading the Quran or listening to someone read it, while listening to the talks of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and while seeing a funeral. Yes indeed…whenever I see a funeral, I feel like it is me experiencing the things the deceased is going through, taken to where the deceased is being taken." (Hakim, III, 326/5260)

By night, not a single person was left in the clan who had not become Muslim. (Ibn Hisham, II, 43-46; Ibn Saad, III, 604-605; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, I, 112-113)

Musab ﷺ then went on to invite Amr ibn Jamuh, a notable from the clan of Salima, reading to him the first eight *ayah* of chapter Yusuf. Though he asked for time to think it over, Amr could not make up his mind. Thereupon with a few youngsters from his tribe helping him, Amr's son Muadh, who had already become a Muslim, one night secretly grabbed his father's idol and threw it in a nearby filth hole. Horrified next morning at seeing his idol thrown in a pile of dirt, Amr took it out of there, and after giving it a thorough cleaning with beautiful scents, put the idol back in its place.

After the same incident repeated itself over a few nights, Amr hung his sword on the idol's neck for it to protect itself. But seeing the idol once again in a pile of dirt the morning after, he finally realized that the lifeless object he had been worshipping for so long could not even protect itself, let alone be of any benefit to another, making him open his eyes to the morning of Islam from the twilight of idolatry. He thanked the Almighty for saving him through the Noble Prophet ﷺ from the darkness he had been in and took active part thereafter in inviting his people to Islam.[236]

The news of the delightful reception of Islam in Medina put the Muslims of Mecca and the Prophet ﷺ in such high spirits that the year came to be known as the Year of Joy. Medina was now becoming ready to become the cradle of Islam.

Of this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

"Lands are conquered with swords…but Medina was conquered with the Quran." (Bazzar, Musnad, 1180; Rudani, 3774)

The Second Aqabah Pledge (The Thirteenth Year of Prophethood)

A year after the First Aqabah Pledge, during the months of pilgrimage, a group of Medinans came again to meet the Noble Prophet ﷺ, this time numbering seventy-five, including two women.

Their pledge of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is known as the Second Aqabah Pledge.

Arriving at Mecca as the head of the group, Musab ﷺ went straight to the Prophet ﷺ before his own home. He gave the good news of the Ansar's swift acceptance of Islam, delighting the Noble Prophet ﷺ. But the fact that Musab went to the Prophet ﷺ before seeing his own pagan mother made her quite upset.

"I will never go to anyone before the Messenger of Allah…I shall never put anyone else before him", was how Musab defended himself.

236. Ibn Hisham, II, 61-63; Dhahabî, *Siyar,* I, 182.

With permission from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Musab ؓ eventually went to his mother and repeated his invitation to Islam. (Ibn Saad, III, 119)

Such was the love nurtured by the Companions for the Gracious Prophet ﷺ.

Jabir ؓ explains the following:

"In the days when the Messenger of Allah was searching for a tribe for protection for his fellow Muslims, only to have each and every one of them turn a cold shoulder, the Almighty sent us to him from Medina; and we believed in him and offered protection. Someone from among us would go to the Messenger of Allah, who would read him the Quran. Upon returning, the person's whole family would follow the lead and become Muslim. In this way, there was no house in Medina in which Islam had not been explained. Then after a while, we got together and asked ourselves:

'Until when are we going to let the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suffer in the mountains of Mecca?'

That was when we decided to go to him, during the pilgrimage season, and pledge our allegiance." (Ahmad, III, 322; Hakim, II, 681-682)

This fortunate group agreed to meet the Prophet ﷺ at Aqabah on one of the days of *tashriq*. Beforehand, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised them not to "… awaken those asleep and wait for those who have not gotten ready on time!"

Passed the third of the night, the Medinans went to Aqabah as agreed and began waiting for the Noble Messenger ﷺ, who appeared a short while later with his uncle Abbas by his side. Even though Abbas had not yet accepted Islam, he had nonetheless assumed the protection of his nephew after the passing away of Abu Talib. And it was he who began negotiating with the Medinans regarding their invitation of the Prophet ﷺ to Medina:

"Medinans! We have protected him from his enemies till now and will continue to do so. He is highly respected among us. And it is out of love and respect that you invite him to Medina where he will be safer; and that happens to be his wish, too. But take him only if you will be able to protect him from his enemies. First you must promise me that you shall never deceive or desert him. Your neighbors, the Jews are hostile to him and I am just not so sure that they will keep their word of peace. Go ahead with this only if you see in yourselves enough power to ward off the hostility of Arab tribes. Discuss it among yourselves thoroughly so that you will not become disunited later. If you have the least doubt of not being able to help Muhammad after he comes, or if it turns out you will hand him over to his enemies, then give the idea up from now! If anyone wishes to speak up from among you now, then let him speak. But let him not be too wordy, as Meccans spies could be on the lookout! And keep this a secret after you leave!"

To dispel the doubts of Abbas, Asad ibn Zurarah ﷺ stood and said the following:

"You, the Messenger of Allah, invited us to leave the religion of our fathers and follow yours. As burdensome and difficult a task as that was, we accepted. You invited us to severe our ties with all our pagan relatives and neighbors. As burdensome and difficult a task as that was, we again accepted. We are well aware that we have put our hands up to shelter one who is wanted dead not only by his tribe, but even by his closest kin. Rest assured, Messenger of Allah, that we shall protect you just like we protect ourselves, our children and women. If we turn back, then we are the most wretched of all creatures. This is our pledge of honor. It is to Allah we all turn for help!"

Following Asad ﷺ, Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ got up to say:

"Messenger of Allah! You can lay down for us any condition you want, on behalf of yourself and your Lord!"

"On behalf of my Lord, I ask you to worship Him without ascribing to Him any partners; and on behalf of myself, I ask you to protect us just as you protect yourselves and properties", the Noble Prophet ﷺ said.

"And what awaits us if we do?" the Medinans asked.

"Paradise", the Prophet ﷺ answered.

"What a profitable trade! Who in their right minds could afford to pass up on that?" (Ibn Kathir,Tafsir, II, 406)

Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ was to reap the profits of this pact years later at the Battle of Mutah, in which he enthusiastically took part despite being informed by the Prophet ﷺ beforehand that he would be martyred; and presenting his life to the Almighty and his legacy to the treasury of Medina, he ended up taking flight to Paradise, to his Lord. The other companions also added more and more blessings to their spiritual earnings by persevering constantly in the way of the Almighty.

The following *ayah* of the Quran was revealed in relation to the pledge of the Medinans.

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اشْتَرٰى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِى التَّوْرٰيةِ وَالْاِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ وَمَنْ اَوْفٰى بِعَهْدِهٖ مِنَ اللّٰهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِى بَايَعْتُمْ بِهٖ وَذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

"Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the Garden; they fight in Allah's way, so they slay and are slain; a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran; and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Rejoice therefore in the pledge which you have made; and that is the mighty achievement." (at-Tawbah, 111)

Thereafter, a few more were given opportunity to speak. Afterward, the Prophet ﷺ began his address of the Medinans, quoting the Quran to further elaborate Islam, then making explicit the terms of their pledge. In addition to the terms already agreed upon, the following terms were also added:

1. The leader of the Muslims should not be opposed, whoever he may be.

2. No blame that may come from the way of nonbelievers should be feared in persevering in the cause of Allah ﷻ.

3. To obey the Messenger of Allah ﷺ through thick and thin and to prefer him to themselves; not to disobey him in any way.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ then asked for twelve *naqibs*[237], or delegates, to represent their clans. The Medinans nominated twelve people, nine from Khazraj and three from Aws.

"You are bondsmen for your clans, just as the Apostles were bondsmen for Isa, the son of Maryam. And I am a bondsman for the Muslims of Mecca", the Light of Being ﷺ said to them.

The representatives agreed.

Abbas, the Prophet's ﷺ uncle, then one by one made each Medinan clasp the hand of the Prophet ﷺ and swear an oath of allegiance.

It was in this pledge that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was invited to Medina, which sparked the Hegira. Medina, known as Yathrib at the time, had now become ready to open her arms to Islam.

As the pledge took place at night, the Meccans had no way of knowing about it. But just as the pledge was being concluded, Iblis, overlooking Aqabah, screamed in a shrill voice:

"People of Mina! Quraysh! Do you realize that Muhammad and those who have turned their backs on the religion of old have gathered and agreed on waging war against you?"

The Prophet ﷺ was quick to reassure them:

237. A *naqib* is a representative of a tribe or a clan.

"Don't fear! That is the voice of Iblis, the enemy of Allah. He can do nothing!" He then advised the Muslims to return to their camps, upon which Abbas ibn Ubadah ﷺ assured:

"I promise by the One who has sent you with the Truth, we could put all of Mina to the sword if you want!"

"We have not been commanded to do that. Now, you should return to your places", the Noble Prophet ﷺ responded.

The Muslims returned to their camps, sleeping until daybreak. Early in the morning, some Meccan idolaters arrived at the camp that included the Muslims, asking the nonbelievers among them whether any agreement with the Noble Prophet ﷺ had taken place. Without the least clue as to what had happened, they assured the Meccans that nothing of the sort had taken place. Unconvinced, the idolaters further investigated the Aqabah Pledge. Soon their worst fears were confirmed as they found out about the Pledge, immediately after which they sent horsemen in all directions to track down the departing Medinans, blocking all routes to Medina. They were able to pin down Saad ibn Ubadah ﷺ.

"Have you entered Muhammad's religion?" they inquired.

When Saad ﷺ answered that he had, they tied both his hands tightly around his neck. Beating him and pulling him by the fringes of his long hair, they brought him to Mecca, where they began to torture him even more brutally. He was set free by Jubayr ibn Mutim,[238] whom Saad ﷺ had helped before, and Harith ibn Harb, who rushed to the scene upon hearing of the incident. Just when the Medinan Muslims had gathered to plan his rescue, Saad ﷺ was able to turn up next to them. (Ibn Hisham, II, 47-57; Ibn Saad, I, 221-223; III, 602-603; Ahmed, III, 322, 461, 462; Haythami, VI, 42-44)

Ibn Abbas ﷺ has said:

"Just as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ are among the *Muhajir*, the Emigrants, for leaving the idolaters of Mecca, there are also emigrants from among the *Ansar*, the Helpers of Medina; those, who on the night of Aqabah, fled to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from the then pagan town of Yathrib." (Nasai, Bayat, 13)

238. Jubayr ibn Mutim ﷺ was a relative of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. For a long time he resisted Islam; he was even in the group that decided on the assassination of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. He sided with the idolaters in the Battle of Badr. At Uhud, he allowed for Wahshi, then his slave, to play a central role in the martyring of Hamza ﷺ. Immediately after the Peace of Hudaybiyah, however, he entered Islam, becoming a sincere Muslim thereafter. A perceptive man of a mild temperament, Jubayr narrated 60 hadiths till his passing away in Medina in 678. (H. 58)

The Pledges of Aqabah do not simply signify a pledge made by twelve or seventy-five people, but the pledge of the entire Muslim host with the Almighty.

The world is a bazaar in which the Hereafter is bought. It remains for us to participate in the above pledge made with the Noble Prophet ﷺ and, like the Companions, rejoice over such a profitable trade.

Just as Musab ﷺ provided a foundation for Islam in Medina, so should we establish the very same foundation in our hearts and those of others, even going door to door in extending that foundation through exemplary behavior. Once the heart is filled with the love of Allah and His Messenger, sacrificing the pleasures of the world, like Musab ﷺ, becomes easy.

An Overview of the Meccan Period

The five points below sum up the attitude of idolaters towards Muslims throughout the thirteen year Meccan Period.

1. Mockery.

2. Insult.

3. Torture.

4. Isolation or severing of all kinds of social and commercial relations.

5. Violent intimidation and even murder, forcing Muslims to immigrate.

Allah ﷻ, describes the Muslim situation in the Quran as follows:

اِنَّ الَّذِينَ اَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ. وَاِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ.
وَاِذَا انْقَلَبُوٓا اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمُ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ. وَاِذَا رَاَوْهُمْ قَالُوٓا اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَٓاءِ لَضَالُّونَ.

“Surely the sinners used to laugh at those who believe. And when they passed by them, they winked at one another. And when they returned to their own followers they returned exulting. And when they saw them, they said: Most surely they have gone astray! (al-Muttaffifin, 29-32)

In response, the method abided to by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, constantly reinforced with Revelation advising him the most suitable manner to adopt, could be summed up as:

1. Cultivating spirituality in the hearts of believers.

2. Being patient in the face of hardships.

3. Counseling with the most beautiful advice.

4. Continuing to persevere without the least compromise.

5. Trusting in and submitting to the Almighty.

As a consequence of this method, despite unfavorable conditions, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was able to succeed in his cause and overcome all difficulties. A fruit of this long and enduring phase was the blessing of Medina, a strategic town, whose locals had embraced the truth in masses. Previously expelled from Ta'if where he had gone with such great expectations, the Prophet ﷺ had never even gone to Medina; yet with Divine reinforcement, Islam had spread like wildfire in the town, and only a short while later it became ready to welcome the Muslims, first and foremost the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

Inspired by the triumph in his cause, a prominent historian has made the following observations regarding the genius of the Prophet ﷺ:

"If the three great measures of genius are the greatness of the cause, the limitation of means and the magnitude of the result, then who could dare to compare the greatest figures of modern history with Muhammad?" (Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*)

The Almighty gave permission to Muslims to migrate only after a thirteen-year phase of blood and tears, as a consequence of which the faiths of Muslims attained contentedness and their hearts prospered with spirituality. Simpler put, the believers paid the dues for their belief.

The period also saw the laying of the foundations of the Islamic state and civilization in Medina that was to set an example for all of mankind, and the raising of persons of strong character who, enthused by the ecstasy of belief, would not shrink back in testing times. These persons virtually became guiding stars for the entire *ummah*.

The Characteristics of the Meccan Revelations

The first verses of the Quran, as known, were about aspects of *aqidah*, or creed, and involved inviting to *tawhid* and to belief in the resurrection, promising paradise to the believers and threatening disbelievers and rebels with hellfire. Only after convincing the believers and strengthening their faith through various proofs were verses on social matters revealed. Trapped in superstitious beliefs and habits as they were, it was not easy for people to quit their ways of old. Failing to apply a gradual procedure to try and rid people of their bad ways could have therefore backfired and deterred them away.

Aisha ﵂ says:

"The first *surah* revealed was one of the *mufassal*s.[239] It spoke of Paradise and Hell. Rulings on the permissible and impermissible were revealed after people had become fully warmed to Islam. If they had been told at the very beginning to quit drinking, they would have reacted:

'We can never quit drinking!'

Had they been told to stop fornicating, they would have said:

'We can never stop fornicating!'

When I was still a child playing in Mecca, *ayah* on faith and the Hereafter like:

بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ اَدْهٰى وَاَمَرُّ

"Nay, the hour is their promised time, and the hour shall be more grievous and bitter", (al-Qamar, 46) came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. al-Baqara and an-Nisa (chapters that include rulings on social matters) were revealed when I was with him in Medina." (Bukhari, Fadail'ul-Quran, 6)

Marked by an elegant and succinct style, the Meccan Chapters assume a certain and uncompromising stance against idolatry. Being eloquent men with a taste for poetry, for any word to affect the Meccans it had to be consummately eloquent and with a perfect measure.

Reducing to naught the idolaters' mastery of literature, to further confuse them, the Almighty even made use of the disjointed alphabetical letters (*huruf'al-muqatta'a*), beginning the texts in a manner previously unheard of. Except for al-Baqara and Al' Imran, all the chapters that begin with the *huruf'al-muqata'a* belong to the Meccan period.

For such reasons, the first verses revealed were so affective that they pierced straight into hearts, captivating their listeners with their flowing and beautiful eloquence.

Another characteristic of the Meccan Revelations is their manner of addressing, which apart from a few exceptions, is in the form of "O Humankind!"

To persuade the idolaters into accepting an array of issues that ran counter to their opinions and practices, the Meccan Revelations also include vows made in the name of various things they had sanctified like the sun, the moon, stars, day

239. The *suwar'ul-mufassal* comprise the final section of the Holy Quran, beginning, in accordance with the preferred view, with Chapter Qaf, which is the 50th chapter, and ending with the very final chapter, an-Nas. The chapters have been named *mufassal* for the fact they are frequently divided with a *Basmala* due to their brevity.

and night and so forth; also for the reason that these created objects by which the oaths were made, display the power of the Almighty as perceived throughout the universe.

Furthermore revealed among the Meccan Revelations are a majority of the Quranic historical accounts, or *qasas*. Taking lessons from history is one of the most emphasized points of these verses. A great portion of the chapters which dwell on the accounts of previous prophets and peoples, especially those of Adam ﷺ and Iblis, are Meccan. One exception is al-Baqara, revealed in Medina.

The narrating of the experiences of past peoples, offering lessons to be taken, played a crucial role in communicating the truth to the idolaters and in their gradual correction. In the foreground of these narrations is always the notion of *tawhid*.

The Meccan verses also map the course an inviter to Islam should follow. They underline that one ought to invite to the truth seeking only the pleasure of the Almighty, not those of the world, and expect its rewards, again, only from Allah ﷻ. One instance of this is in Chapter as-Shuara. Enjoining upon their people piety and virtue as messengers of the Almighty, the Prophets Hud, Salih, Lut and Shuayb ﷺ add:

وَمَا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ اِنْ اَجْرِىَ اِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds." (ash-Shuara, 109, 127, 145, 164, 180)

The second half of the Quran was mostly revealed in Mecca. As the Meccans were generally conceited people, the word كَلاَّ, (*kalla*) the definitive 'nay', can be easily noticed throughout these *surah*, rejecting and threatening the idolaters over their attitude. Hence, all the chapters in which the word كَلاَّ is to be found are Meccan and they all happen to be in the second half of the Quran.

Similarly, chapters that contain verses of *sajdah*, or prostration, were also revealed in Mecca. Thereby people accustomed to prostrating to other things were encouraged to give the Almighty His due, and reflect over such verses.

These first verses revealed in Mecca declare all the old superstitious habits as falsities based on ignorance, replacing them with universal principles of morality.

The Meccan verses laid the foundation of a firm society with respect to belief, thought and morals. Containing moral principles, the verses aim toward ridding Muslims of false beliefs and customs and replacing them with an unshakable belief in the Truth, patience, will and perseverance.

As the Meccan revelations contain no verdicts on legal issues, except for salat, they also do not contain any rulings concerning deeds of worship. There are no legal verses, for instance, in the Meccan chapters of Yunus, ar-Rad, Furqan, Yasin and al-Hadid. What can be found generally are principles of faith, the attributes of Allah ﷻ, thought-provoking accounts of previous prophets and scenes of the Hereafter.

The Prophet's Last Resort: Migration Permission for the Hegira in the Thirteenth Year of Prophethood and Migration to Medina

After finding out about Muslim plans to migrate to where they would find protection following the Second Aqabah Pledge, the idolaters took their abuse to new heights. With this unbearable torment making life almost impossible for Muslims in Mecca, the believers asked permission of the Prophet ﷺ to migrate.

By the will of the Almighty, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointed towards the road to Medina and said:

"I have been shown that your destination shall be a place of date gardens wedged amid rocky terrain". (Bukhari, Kafalah, 4)

Advising them to embrace the *Ansar*, their brothers in Medina, the Prophet ﷺ then added:

"The Glorious Allah has blessed you with brothers and a land where you shall find peace!"

Without making it obvious to the idolaters, the Muslims thereupon got their preparations under way, and aiding one another, began migrating in secret.[240]

Even though the Believers were generously welcomed in Abyssinia, the first destination of Muslim migration, the region did not meet the requirements for being a center for a universal religion. But Medina, both politically and commercially, was a town favorable to being an Islamic center. Thus, it was there the Hegira would take place.

Indeed Medina became a shelter for the Believers. The worst fears of the Meccan idolaters were hence confirmed; Islam had set forth from Mecca to Medina, where it had gained an enormous reputation. The idolaters simply could not come to terms with how terrible a loss the forcible departure of the Prophet ﷺ from his hometown was for them. It was truly a great loss. But they could not even feel it, let alone see the consequences.

And the Almighty revealed to His Prophet ﷺ:

240. See Ibn Hisham, II, 76; Ibn Saad, I, 226.

... وَاِذًا لَا يَلْبَثُونَ خِلَافَكَ اِلَّا قَلِيلا

"…they will not stay therein after you, except for a little while." (al-Isra, 76)

Deceived by their seeming power and ego, the idolaters had fooled themselves into believing that mocking, threatening and torturing the Believers would deter them from the Truth, and enable to keep themselves in authority in Mecca. Little were they aware of what was lying in wait for them: an absolute and miserable defeat without return. After all, the Muslims were not leaving Mecca out of fear, but from the awareness of the need to found Islam upon the strongest foundations.

The Hegira should never be taken as a helpless and pitiable flight. For the *Muhajir*, the Emigrants, Medina was a haven, a headquarters in which they settled to render sovereign the religion of the Almighty, by joining forces with other Muslim brothers and sisters.

The late Necip Fazıl gives voice to this in the poem below:

Hegira…the support that is sought from afar,
For a man of mission, the home is a fetter,
The hope… from outside to envelop the core,
The will to conquer the center from abroad…
Hegira…The support that is sought from afar!

The Emigrants were leaving behind all they had of wealth and relatives, secretly or openly setting forth on the road to Medina.

Ali ﷺ gives the following account:

"I know of nobody who openly migrated to Medina. Omar ibn Khattab was an exception. Prior to leaving, he armed himself with his sword, hung his bow on his shoulder and with his spear and arrows in his hands went to the Kaabah. All the Meccan notables were there. Omar ﷺ circumambulated the Kaabah seven times and then went next to them, and as if to give a glimpse of the victories to come, declared:

'Here you have it! I am leaving for Medina. Whoever wants to leave behind a weeping mother, a widow and orphans can follow me and face me off behind the valley!'

Nobody dared take up the challenge." (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, IV, 152-153)

The Medinans were welcoming their brothers with open arms and helping them from the bottom of their hearts. The Muslims of Mecca were thus dubbed *Muhajir*, meaning emigrants, and the Medinan Muslims *Ansar*, or helpers.

The Almighty states:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْاَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْاَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
بِاِحْسَانٍ رَضِىَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِى
تَحْتَهَا الْاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَآ اَبَدًا ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

"And the first to lead the way, of the Muhajir and the Ansar, and those who followed them in goodness - Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He has made ready for them Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide for ever. That is the supreme triumph." (at-Tawba, 100)

Scholars have derived the following conclusions from the permission given to Muslims to migrate:

Hegira was compulsory in the time of the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Generally perceived, there is a compulsoriness of Hegira that will remain till the Day of Judgment. But the particular Hegira that ended with the conquest of Mecca, however, is peculiar to the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

It is impermissible for a Muslim to remain in a place where he cannot fulfill duties like the adhaan, salat in congregation and fasting. The *ayah* below is proof:

اِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفّٰيهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ظَالِمِىٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا
مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِى الْاَرْضِ قَالُٓوا اَلَمْ تَكُنْ اَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا
فِيهَا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَاْوٰيهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيرًا. اِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ
وَالنِّسَآءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا.

"Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say: In what state were you? They shall say: We were weak on Earth. They shall say: Was not Allah's earth spacious, so that you should have migrated therein? So it is these whose abode is hell, an evil resort. Except the weak

from among the men and the children who neither have in their power the means, nor can they find a way to escape." (an-Nisa, 97-98)

The above *ayah* describes those who did not migrate and continued to remain in a society of unbelievers, as being unjust to their souls. For preferring their comfort, habits, families, wealth and vested interests over their Religion, their excuse of being among the 'weak on Earth' is not accepted in the Divine tribunal. The excuse is valid only for the elderly, invalids, and women and children who genuinely could not find the means to join the Hegira.

Another matter the Hegira teaches us is that no matter how distant Muslim lands may be from one another, it is obligatory to help those afflicted with oppression. So far as the *ijma*, or consensual opinion of Muslim scholars are concerned, Muslims who, despite having the power to do so, fail to help other Muslims oppressed in any given part of the world, partake in a major sin.

The Light of Being ﷺ placed great importance on the Hegira and urged all Muslims to take part until the Conquest of Mecca. This was mainly because until then, all lands besides Medina were foreign, making it practically impossible for a believer to learn and practice his beliefs.

Idolater Plans of Assassination

Seeing Mecca becoming more and more deserted by the day, the idolaters felt the urgency of the situation at hand. They hurriedly gathered at the House of Nadwa, the hotbed of mischief. Present there was also an old man, claiming to be from Najd. He was none other than Iblis himself in the guise of a human being.

They lengthily discussed what they were to do. Many suggestions, from imprisoning the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to sending him into exile outside of Mecca were put forth, with all of which the old man of Najd disagreed. They finally arrived at a callous decision: To murder the Messenger of Allah ﷺ!

It was Abu Jahl, the Pharaoh of his time, who mapped out the plan:

"First, we arm one young man from each clan. Then we get them to attack and kill him all at once. This way his blood money will be distributed among all clans. And surely the Abd Manaf clan will not dare to wage war on all clans in Mecca, so they will have to settle for the blood money. That, we can pay with no trouble!"

The old man of Najd was the first to rejoice:

"No single man has spoken with a clearer mind than him…I can't think of anything better!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 93-95)

The idolaters busy with their sinister plans, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was virtually left alone in Mecca. A Prophet with such delicate care for his people, he preferred to remain and watch the backs of the leaving *Muhajir*. Besides, this had also been the Divine Will. When Abu Bakr, who was to be the one and only companion of the Prophet ﷺ in this sacred journey, asked permission to migrate, the Prophet said:

"Be patient. Who knows? Perhaps Allah shall grant you a good traveling companion!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 92)

Sensing the awaiting blessings, and as a mark of joy, Abu Bakr ﷺ bought two camels for 800 dirhams and nurtured them for four months in preparation for the journey. (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 45)

By the time the idolaters made the move to implement their plan, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had received the Divine command to migrate:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخِلْنِى مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَاَخْرِجْنِى مُخْرَجَ
صِدْقٍ وَاجْعَلْ لِى مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطَانًا نَصِيرًا

"And say: My Lord! Make me to enter a goodly entering, and cause me to go forth a goodly going forth, and grant me assistance from Your power." (al-Isra, 80)

Besides the above Revelation, Jibril ﷺ had hinted to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of the idolaters' assassination plot, saying, "You shall not sleep in your bed tonight!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 95)

Thereupon in the heat of high noon, with everyone at rest in their homes, the Noble Prophet ﷺ went next to Abu Bakr ﷺ, informing him of the command to migrate.

"Together?" asked Abu Bakr ﷺ.

"Yes, together!" the Prophet ﷺ answered.

The tears of joy welling up Abu Bakr's eyes were alluding to splendid the inner beauty of his heart.[241]

Afterward, the Noble Messenger ﷺ also gave the news to Ali ﷺ, who was to be left behind to give back to their owners the goods entrusted in the safekeeping of the Prophet ﷺ. Knowing his trustworthiness and righteousness, there was almost not a single man in Mecca, who in one way or another had not placed their valuables in the custody the Prophet ﷺ.

241. See Ibn Hisham, II, 97-98.

Then as a precaution against the plots of Meccans, he said to Ali ﷺ, "Lay in my bed tonight…and cover yourself in my mantle. Don't be afraid! No harm shall come to you!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 95, 98)

That the Prophet advised Ali ﷺ to use his mantle as a blanket also provides an example for *tabarruk*, that is seeking blessings from the belongings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ later also sent a mantle to Uways al-Qarani with the message:

"Wear the mantle and pray for the *ummah*." (Fariduddin Attar, Tadhkirat'ul-Awliya'a, p. 21)[242]

Another thing worthy of attention here is the complete submission of Ali ﷺ to the Prophet ﷺ. It was not for the Companions to show the slightest hesitancy in fulfilling the Prophetic commands and neglecting to heed the Prophet's ﷺ words and actions. They never felt the need to ask why. They always showed the utmost care not to neglect even a single *sunnah*, and in implementing each, they illustrated the fear of falling into deviancy if they were to abandon it. Their abidance by the Quran and Sunnah was like that of a shadow to its origin.[243]

Ali -may Allah ennoble his countenance- recounts:

"On the verge of his setting off to the Hegira, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and I went to the Kaabah.

'Sit down', he told me.

I sat. Intending to climb onto the roof of the Kaabah, he stepped on my shoulders. But suddenly I lost all my strength. Seeing me lose my strength, he quickly came down off my shoulders. This time he sat down.

'Step on my shoulders', he said.

I did what he told me. Then he rose and hoisted me up. I was overcome with such power that I felt I could rise to the ends of the sky if I wanted. I climbed on the roof. Placed there was an idol made of bronze and copper.

'Throw it down, Ali', the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said. So I did.

242. Also see, Muslim, Fadailu's-Sahâba, 223-225.
243. See Bukhari, Humus, 1; Muslim, Jihad, 52; Abu Dâwûd, Haraj, 18; Ahmed, I, 10.

The instant it hit the ground, it shattered like a glass bowl. I quickly came down from the roof. We promptly left the scene in order not to be seen." (Ahmed, I, 84; Hakim, III, 6/4265)

Come the night of Hegira, the idolaters had already surrounded the house of the Noble Prophet ﷺ even before he could take a step outside. But with a boundless trust in and submission to the Almighty, the Prophet ﷺ showed not a single trace of anxiety or fear. Taking a handful of soil from the ground, he threw it towards the awaiting idolaters and moved smoothly through their ranks reciting the following verses from Chapter Ya-Sin:

اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِٓی اَعْنَاقِهِمْ اَغْلَالًا فَهِیَ اِلَی الْاَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ. وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَیْنِ اَیْدِیهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّافَاَغْشَیْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا یُبْصِرُونَ.

"We have put chains round their necks right up to their chins, so that their heads are forced up (and they cannot see). And We have put a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them, and further, We have covered them up; so that they cannot see." (Ya-Sin, 8-9)

Blinded by nothing other than the blindness of their hearts, they of course could not see. Passing through them, in front of their eyes, was the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Since light is not perceivable by blind eyes and hearts, their sights in the end counted for nothing.

It was only after some time, when they were asked by someone passing by:

"Who on earth are you waiting for?"

"Muhammad!"

"You fools! Muhammad has long left, apparently flinging dirt on your faces in the process!"

When the idolaters reached for their heads, they found they were indeed stained with soil. Enraged, they quickly stormed inside the house, seeing someone lying in the Prophet's bed.

"There is Muhammad! He is under cover, fast asleep!" they shouted.

They walked hurriedly to the bed, only to shake their heads in disbelief when the man lying in the bed lifted his head and threw a glance at them. It was Ali ﷺ lying in front of them, not the Prophet ﷺ.

"The man was telling us the truth after all", they admitted, crestfallen. They angrily turned to Ali ﷺ:

"Where is your cousin?" they shouted.

"I have little idea. What…do you think I watch him wherever he goes? Besides, it was you telling him to leave Mecca all along…So my guess is, he must have left!"

Thereupon, the idolaters began rebuking and insulting Ali ﷺ. They even took him to the Kaabah where he was held in custody for some time, eventually released afterwards. (Ibn Hisham, II, 96; Ahmed, I, 348; Yakubi, II, 39)

While the miserable men, whose hearts were locked and eyes blind to the truth, were prowling around the house of the Prophet ﷺ, little were they aware that the Prophet ﷺ had long made it to the house of Abu Bakr ﷺ. Though the idolaters had plotted, the Almighty had made an even greater plot of which they had no idea. Allah ﷻ, describes this as follows:

وَاِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ اَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ اَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ
وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

"And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you away; and they devised plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best of planners." (al-Anfal, 30)

The Long Road

Arriving at Abu Bakr's ﷺ house after leaving his, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remitted the money for the camel prepared for him for the journey, despite Abu Bakr's reluctance. Having slipped through the idolaters only moments before, the Noble Prophet ﷺ this time acted cautiously as instructed by the Divine will and to set an example for his *ummah*. Together they left from the back of Abu Bakr's house, where the camels were to remain for a few more days.

Again, as a subtle precaution, they headed toward the direction opposite to Medina.

Abu Bakr ﷺ was walking behind the Prophet ﷺ one moment and in front of him the next. Upon being asked by the Noble Messenger ﷺ for the reason he walked thus, he replied:

"I fear for your wellbeing, Messenger of Allah".

They eventually made it to the Cave of Thawr.

"It is best if you wait until I clear out the cave, Messenger of Allah", Abu Bakr recommended after which he entered the cave, cleaning it up and blocking all holes in case pests might enter. Only then did he advise the Prophet ﷺ to make his way in. (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 222-223)

Headed by Abu Jahl, the idolaters meanwhile rushed to Abu Bakr's house, and unable to find the two there, they began interrogating his daughter Asma. For saying she knew nothing of her father's whereabouts, the poor girl bore the brunt of the idolaters' frustration and anger, receiving a fierce slap across the face.

The Light of Being and his "Companion of the Cave" (*Yar-i Ghar*)[244] were to remain in the cave for a while, where they could find breathing space from the idolaters who were busy searching for them on the roads to Medina. Besides, they were under the protection and assistance of the Almighty, who was intervening, so to speak, just when all options were exhausted. Following their traces, some idolaters were in fact able to come to within the threshold of the cave. But other than a pigeon's nest at the entrance of the cave they found nothing but cobwebs, as if no man had set its eyes on the cave before, let alone entered it. With the command of the Almighty, moreover, a tree had grown in the entrance, blocking the Prophet's ﷺ face from prying eyes.[245]

Without suspecting the slightest possibility of finding the Noblest Being ﷺ there, the idolaters turned back.

The common aid and protector of these two dignified wayfarers was no other than Allah ﷻ. Thus, the miserable men who had turned up at the cave could see nothing but a pigeon's nest and cobwebs. As elegantly said by poet Arif Nihat Asya:

The spider was neither in the sky,
Nor in water, nor on land,
It was only in the eyes
Blinded to the Truth so grand.

As all this was taking place, Abu Bakr ؓ was becoming increasingly restless in the cave. He was in fear, not for himself but for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

If the idolaters were to do so little as to peek inside, they could have easily seen the two. Instead they were walking around the cave, inspecting it and remarking, "Had there been anyone inside, the pigeon's eggs and the spider web would have long been destroyed!"

244. *Yar-i Ghar*, meaning the Companion of the Cave, is an expression used to describe the companionship of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ in the Cave of Thawr. In time, it has also been used to signify genuine friendships.

245. Ibn Saad, I, 229; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya,* III, 223-224.

Some who suggested taking a look inside the cave were prevented by the furious Umayyah ibn Khalaf:

"Are you out of your minds? What are you going to do inside? How can you even suggest walking inside a cave knit with layers of cobweb? Believe me…this web was weaved well before even the birth of Muhammad!"

While Abu Jahl remarked:

"I swear Muhammad is nearby…I can just feel him! But he has blinded our eyes again with magic!"[246]

Overcome with anxiety, Abu Bakr ﷺ meanwhile was whispering to the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

"If they kill me, I am just one person after all. But if something happens to you, then the whole *ummah* will be destroyed!"

The Noble Prophet ﷺ was offering salat on his feet and Abu Bakr ﷺ was keeping an eye out, all the while voicing his uneasiness:

"Your tribe is looking for you everywhere. By Allah, it is not for myself that I fear but I am worried they will do something to you!"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ calmly responded:

"Do not fear, Abu Bakr! Surely Allah is with us!" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 223-224; Diyarbakri, I, 328-329)

This phase is retold in the Quran:

اِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللّٰهُ اِذْ اَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِىَ اثْنَيْنِ اِذْ هُمَا فِى الْغَارِ اِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهٖ لَا تَحْزَنْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَنَا فَاَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلٰى وَكَلِمَةُ اللّٰهِ هِىَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

"If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: 'Fear not, surely Allah is with us.' So Allah sent down His serenity upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of Allah, that is the highest; and Allah is Mighty, Wise." (at-Tawbah, 40)

Abu Bakr ﷺ later said:

246. Ibn Saad, I, 228; Halabî, II, 209.

"In the cave I could see the idolaters' feet. 'If they had only kneeled they would have seen us', I whispered to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said, 'Why do you fear for two companions, the third of whom is Allah?' (Bukhari, Fadail'ul-Ashab 2, Manaqib 45; Muslim, Fadailu's-Sahabah, 1)

The Cave of Thawr where the Prophet ﷺ had been guided following the thirteen-year struggle in Mecca, was a different sort of training place than Hira.[247] There, the gist was to observe the flow of Divine mysteries and might, to read the Wisdom right from the book of man and universe; and to become immersed in Divine secrets, thereby to develop the heart.

The stay in Thawr lasted for three days and three nights. The Prophet ﷺ was not alone. He was accompanied by Abu Bakr ؓ, the noblest of men after prophets. Honored with being by the Prophet's ﷺ side for three days and nights, he thus became 'the Second of the Two'.

By counseling his friend:

لَا تَحْزَنْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَنَا

"Fear not! Allah is with us", the Noble Prophet ﷺ was at the same time revealing the secret of being-with-Allah (*ma'iyyah*). This was the beginning of the teaching of silent *dhikr*, or remembrance, the opening of hearts to the Almighty on the way of becoming content.

Thus the Cave of Thawr served as the starting place of the training of the heart towards reaching the Almighty from the horizon of endless mysteries, the first stop of this Divine journey.

The Noble Prophet's ﷺ exposure of the secrets from the realm of the heart to his *ummah* thus first began in this cave with Abu Bakr ؓ, the first ring of the Golden Chain set to survive until the Day of Judgment.

Faith receives its power from the love of the Prophet ﷺ. The main impetus in this sublime journey is the love felt for the Noble Messenger ﷺ and the only way of reaching the Almighty is through feeling such affection. In any case, to love is not only to love the person, but also to love whoever and whatever the person loves.

247. Thawr provided a precinct of education distinct from that of Hira. In Hira the seeds of *iman* were cultivated, whereas at Thawr the seeds of *ihsan* and *tasawwuf* were planted after the seeds of *iman* had already flourished. This shows that a heart must first live *sharia*, by virtue of which it acquires an aptitude for *tasawwuf*.

Keeping love ever alive is possible through the spiritual bond (*rabitah*).[248] A raw and shallow understanding can never conceive Divine Love.

Understanding the spiritual bond of Abu Bakr ﷺ with the Noble Prophet ﷺ should leave an impression on each mind, the depth of which depends on their capacities. Abu Bakr ﷺ would receive a different kind of sublime satisfaction each time he talked with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; being the person most privy to prophetic secrets, he would always long for the Prophet ﷺ even when he was by his side witnessing unique manifestations.

Indeed, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remarked appreciatively:

"I have never benefited from the wealth of anyone like I have from the wealth of Abu Bakr", Abu Bakr ﷺ responded, in tears:

"Are not my wealth and I for you anyway?" (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 11); an expression of total devotion to the Prophet ﷺ and annihilation in him. (In tasawwuf, this spiritual position is defined as *Fana fi'r-Rasul*).

One point during their stay at Thawr, the Prophet ﷺ, placing his head on Abu Bakr's lap, had drifted off to a light nap. At that stage Abu Bakr ﷺ noticed a small hole close by in the cave. To prevent the likely appearance of a pest from the hole that could harm the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ﷺ, blocked it with his foot, quickly but also delicately not to wake him up.

Soon, as part of the Divine test, it turned out that Abu Bakr ﷺ had every reason to worry, when a snake made its presence felt in the hole, fiercely biting Abu Bakr's ﷺ foot, dribbling its venom. Abu Bakr ﷺ was left in such agony that even though he did not move in order not to awaken the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he nonetheless could not contain his tears; such that one dropped right on the blessed face of the Prophet ﷺ. Waking up, the Noble Messenger ﷺ inquired:

"What's wrong Abu Bakr? What happened?"

Even though Abu Bakr ﷺ said there was nothing wrong, he ended up telling his experience upon the Prophet's ﷺ insistence. (Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 477; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 223)

Without further ado, the Noble Prophet ﷺ applied his saliva with his finger to the bite wound. With the blessing of Allah, the wound of Abu Bakr ﷺ was quickly healed, without a single trace of pain left.

248. For a more detailed elaboration of *rabitah*, see Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ, *İmandan İhsâna TASAVVUF,* p. 249-257, Istanbul 2002.

Though from a disputable source, there is an account according to which the Noble Prophet ﷺ asked the snake, in spiritual language, the reason for the bite, to which the snake responded:

"Messenger of Allah…I have been waiting for years in that small hole longing to see you. Just when I finally had the opportunity to realize my wish, I saw my path had been blocked. Unable to withhold the severe desire to see you, to unblock my path, I had no other option than to bite."

This inspired poet Fuzuli to elaborate the following, in celebration of the Noble Prophet ﷺ being a source of spiritual and physical healing, from which those who befriend him can receive a share:

Drunk by His friend, and the fount of life a snake's venom shall be,
But venom is what becomes of water drunk by His enemy.

When during his caliphate Omar ﷺ overheard some people implying his superiority to Abu Bakr ﷺ, he interrupted and said:

"By Allah, Abu Bakr is better than Omar's entire family. More so, even one day of Abu Bakr's life is more blessed than Omar's entire family: the day when Abu Bakr was by the side of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he left his home for the cave." (Hakim, III, 7/4268)

Throughout their stay in the Cave of Thawr, Abu Bakr's daughter Asma would bring them food, while his son Abdullah would spend each night at the cave with them, returning to Mecca toward the break of dawn, leading the idolaters to think he had spent the night in the town. An exceptionally witty and capable man, Abdullah would mix with the idolaters during the day and listen unassumingly to their plots against the Prophet ﷺ, leaking the information to the cave at night.

Amir ibn Fuhayrah, the freed slave of Abu Bakr, would likewise graze Abu Bakr's sheep alongside the other sheep with the shepherds of Mecca. Setting out with them early in the morning, he would purposely lag back from the other shepherds on their return at nightfall, going to the cave with the sheep, for the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his honorable friend to obtain their milk. On his return to Mecca in the early hours of the morning, Amir would wipe out the footprints of Abdullah with the hooves of his flock, making them unnoticeable.[249]

Having been in search of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ for three days now, the idolaters had lost all hope. Receiving the news of Meccan despair from Abdullah,

249. Ibn Hisham, II, 99; Bukhari, Manaqıbu'l-Ansâr, 45; Haythami, VI, 53.

the Noble Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ, on the fourth day, mounted their camels brought by the guide and set off from the cave. This meant that the time had come for the Prophet ﷺ to bid farewell to his hometown where he had spent his entire life till that day, which thus cast grief over him. He very much loved the blessed town of Mecca. A short time before, overlooking the town from the hill of Hazwarah, he had remarked:

"By Allah, Mecca, you are for me the most beloved of all places. Had I not been driven out, I would never have turned my back on you!" (Ahmed, IV, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 68/3925)

Again, the Noble Prophet ﷺ said:

"What a lovely town you are Mecca and how much do I love you! I would never have sought haven in any other, if it were not for my tribe expelling me!" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 68/3926)

Comfort came through Divine Revelation, dispersing the Prophet's sorrow:

اِنَّ الَّذِی فَرَضَ عَلَیْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لَرَآدُّكَ اِلٰی مَعَادٍ

"Most surely He Who has made the Quran binding on you shall bring you home again. (al-Qasas, 85)

Explicitly promising the return, also as the first sign of the Conquest of Mecca, this *ayah* also served to rid the Prophet's ﷺ heart from sorrow and make way for joy.

The 400 km stretch between Mecca and Medina then took eight days to complete at a camel's pace. In spite of the long road, the scorching weather and the burning sand, the journeymen continued their walk non-stop for the first day.

Being a trader who had made numerous journeys to Damascus, Abu Bakr was a recognizable face for many. So at times during the journey they would come across people he knew, asking Abu Bakr of 'the identity of the man in front of him'. Acting prudently and to stay safe, Abu Bakr would reply:

"He is my guide…He is showing me the way!" Of course, at heart, he would mean "he is guiding me to the best of ways." (Ibn Saad, I, 233-235; Ahmed, III, 211)

Led by the tracker Abdullah ibn Urayqit[250], the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ؓ and Amir ibn Fuhayrah stopped by a tent near Qudayd owned by Ummu Mabed, who

250. Abdullah ibn Urayqit, though then a nonbeliever, was a man thought highly of. Although it is disputed

used to take care of the needs of passing travellers. So the blessed travellers bound for Medina asked her for some milk.

In the tent there was a weak sheep, which did not even have enough power to join the flock to graze, much less milk in its udders. It was therefore left behind in one corner of the tent. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked permission from Ummu Mabed to milk it, she said:

"Do as you wish—but good luck finding a drop of milk in her!"

After praying to Allah ﷻ, to bless the sheep with prosperity, the Noble Prophet ﷺ began milking it with his own hands, ending up drawing out plenty of milk from it.

From what Ummu Mabed later told, that sheep survived until a drought that struck during the caliphate of Omar ؓ, at which time they milked it day and night, even when livestock could not find any grass to graze.

After the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left Abu Mabed's tent, her husband turned up. Astonished at the sight of the amount of milk inside, he exclaimed:

"Where did these come from, Ummu Mabed? The sheep are all away on land, all infertile, and there is nothing to milk! What happened?"

"Today a holy man came to the tent", Ummu Mabed said, going on to explain the event and the Prophet's ﷺ beautiful traits.

"Go on, tell me more about him!" Abu Mabed requested, upon which his wife began elaborating further:

"A handsome man, with a luminous face…He has exceptionally good morals. There was nothing wrong with him that I could see. His eyes are black and sparkling, lashes thick but slender and there is a politeness to his voice. Somewhat tall, he has black hair and a slightly long beard.

"There is serenity and majesty in his quietness, and a flowing beauty and kindness in his speech. His words are like perfectly aligned pearls, spilling from his mouth with measure. He speaks clearly, separating precisely right from the wrong. Neither did he speak very little as if to show inability, nor a lot that would make one wearisome.

"From a distance, he looks the most imposing and awe-inspiring of all men, but up close, he is the most amicable and charming. Of medium height, he is neither outrageously tall, nor short. He is like a sapling that has surpassed in beauty the other saplings it has grown among. Next to him he had friends who would peacefully listen to each word he uttered and rush to fulfil his each command. He

whether or not he later became a Muslim, preferable are the reports that he in fact did.

is dearly respected. From what I saw, blaming or telling off others is something he never does."

Upon hearing this vivid description, Abu Mabed remarked:

"That man is the Prophet from Quraysh. How I wish I had met him and become his friend! But still I am going to try when the first opportunity presents itself."

During those days, an unknown voice in Mecca was heard delivering emotional eulogies in praise of the guests of Ummu Mabed's tent. Stirred by this unknown voice, Hassan ibn Thabit improvised a poem declaring that the people who let go of their Prophet are now doomed, and that the Prophet is spreading guidance in the heart of Medina, reading aloud the words of Allah ﷻ. (Ibn Saad, I, 230-231; VIII, 289; Hakim, III, 10-11)

Abu Mabed's entire family ended up accepting Islam and the honour of becoming Companions of the Prophet.

Incapable of finding the blessed travellers in spite of their efforts, the idolaters as a last resort offered a ludicrous award for their capture. One of the many adventurers dazzled by this promise of reward was the hunter Suraqa ibn Malik.

At the end of a long search, Suraqa was able to track down the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. With the hope of seizing him, Suraqa immediately had his horse gallop towards them. Suddenly, however, the hooves of his horse sank into the sand, causing Suraqa to fall off.

Despite great effort, Suraqa could not free himself from the sand in which he was bogged and resume his pursuit of the Prophet ﷺ. Only after a while of struggling did he come to his senses and began feeling remorse. Thereupon, he sought the mercy of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed for him, shortly after which Suraqa's horse rose from the sand. Suraqa instantly had a turn of heart for the better and became a genuine friend of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. With the intention of keeping their location secret, Suraqa returned, diverting others from heading towards them by suggesting various other directions. (Muslim, Zuhd, 75)

Echoing in Suraqa's ears for a while to come were the following words the Prophet ﷺ told him:

"How will you feel Suraqa, the day you shall wear Khosrau's gold bracelets and crown, and don his belt?"

Indeed, when the bracelets, belt and crown of the defunct Khosrau were brought to Medina following the conquest of Persia, Caliph Omar ؓ called Suraqa and, making him wear the adornments, told him to lift his hands and say:

"Allahu Akbar! Praise be to Him who has taken these away from Khosrau ibn Hurmuz, who paraded himself as the god of men, and placed it in the hands of Suraqa ibn Malik, of the sons of Mudlij!" (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, II, 332; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, II, 19)

Encountering Buraydah ibn Husayb and his tribe on the way near Ghamim, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ invited them to Islam. They all accepted wholeheartedly. That night, the Light of Being ﷺ taught Buraydah ؓ the opening part of Chapter Maryam.[251]

Undoing the white turban (*imamah*) on his head, Buraydah then said to the Prophet ﷺ:

"Allow me to be your flag bearer!"

Buraydah thereafter bore the flag for them, until they reached the village of Quba.

Afterwards on the way, they met a commercial caravan returning from Damascus, among which was Zubayr ibn Awwam who enshrouded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Bakr in two white cloaks.[252]

Each step was now drawing the Hegira company closer to Medina. Regardless of the idolaters rallying each and every person they could to murder the Noble Prophet ﷺ, he was nonetheless proceeding steadily, continuing to extend his invitation to Islam on the way.

Saad ad-Dalil ؓ,[253] one of the Companions, recounts the following:

"During the Hegira, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ came to our place. A daughter of Abu Bakr ؓ was with us at the time, being breastfed by a wet nurse. They wanted to reach Medina through the shortest way possible. We told them that they were on the Ghair Way amid the Raqubah Passage, famous for two bandits known as *Mukhanan*, and that he only needed to say the word for us to take care of them.

'Take us to them', the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said.

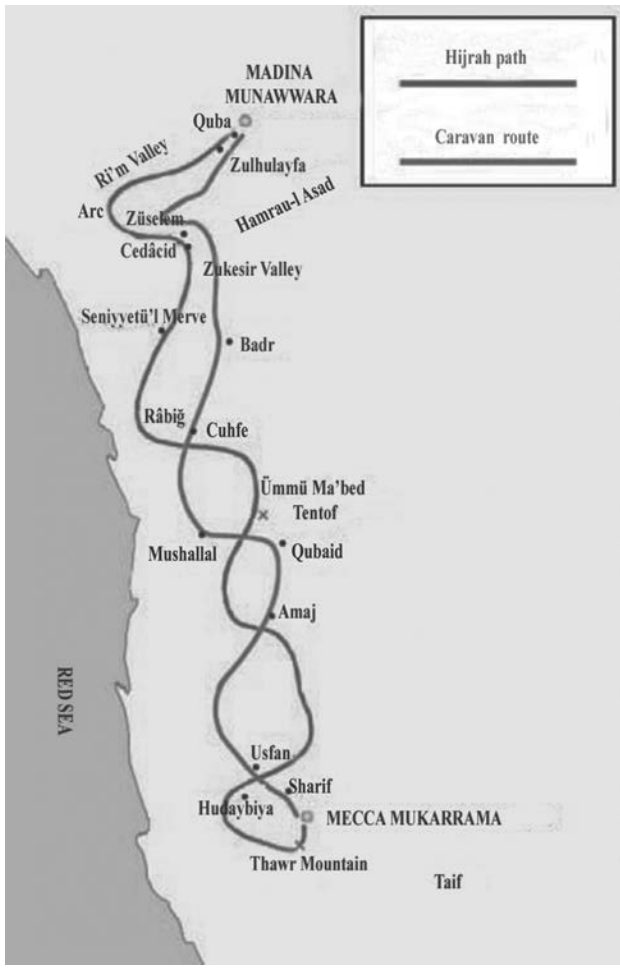
So we set out. When we walked up to the end of the Raqubah slope, we saw the bandits, one of whom we heard say to the other:

'That man looks like he is from Yemen.'[254]

251. Ibn Saad, IV, 242.
252. Bukhari, Manâqıbu'l-Ansâr, 45.
253. For showing the shortest route to Medina and guiding the Blessed Prophet ﷺ through the Raqubah Passage, the great Companion was given the appellation *ad-Dalil*, the Guide.
254. Intended by the remark is the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was from Mecca. Mecca was regarded as part of Tihama, a region classified as within the borders of Yemen. the Kaabah, for that very reason,

Calling the two next to him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained and openly invited them to Islam. They accepted there and then. When the Prophet ﷺ asked their names, they replied, 'We are called *Mukhanan* (i.e. the despised two)'.

'Quite the reverse, you are *Mukraman* (i.e. the honoured two)', the Prophet ﷺ said. He then told the two to go to Medina before them with the good news of their upcoming arrival." (Ahmed, IV, 74)



The Long Awaited Guest

Excitement was at its height for the Medinans who had long received the news of the Prophet's ﷺ impending arrival. They had gathered at the outskirts of the town

has also been called *al-Kaaba'tul-Yemeniyya*. (Ibn Athir, *an-Nihaya*, V, 300)

in anticipation of the arrival of their blessed guest, in hope of welcoming the brilliant envoy and garner their share of blessing.

At long last, on Monday the 12th of Rabiulawwal,[255] the joyous shouts "They are coming!" were finally beginning to reverberate throughout Medina.

Enlivened by the good news, the streets of Medina were now resounding with the sounds of *takbir*. The Muslims took their arms. Mounted or on foot, they rushed to welcome their blessed guest.

With the arrival, under Divine protection and assistance, of the long awaited travellers at the nearby village of Quba, the whole town bubbled over, sent into blissful celebration.

The fervent tune of *Talaa'l-bedru alayna*[256] rising to the skies from the surrounding hills were setting hearts ablaze with joy. To register all events to take place thereafter until the Final Hour, history was meanwhile setting the Hegira calendar in motion.

As a majority of Muslims had never before seen the Light of Being ﷺ in their lives, they did not recognize him, and for a while took Abu Bakr Siddiq ؓ to be the Prophet. The Noble Prophet ﷺ was in the meantime keeping quiet. He was directly exposed to the scorching heat of the sun, which was when Abu Bakr ؓ made a move to shade him with his mantle. Only then did the Muslims realize the identity of the Prophet ﷺ.[257]

From that day on, Medina was to become the center and mirror of Islam's development and progress. The dark face of disbelief was fading out more and more. Instilled with the sublime meanings of the Hegira, the Masjids of Medina and Quba have been left as living memories and legacies of this blessed journey until the Final Hour.

Laying all their belongings at the feet of the *Muhajirun*, the *Ansar* proclaimed:

"Here is my wealth…Half is yours!" The immeasurable sacrifice and devotion that is Muslim brotherhood was thus initiated there and then. Medina cemented her unshakeable place and reputation in Islamic history. All deeds of Islam, social and personal, and struggles became manifest in a unique way in Medina, setting an example for the rest of the *ummah*.

In Quba, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was a guest at the house of Ibn Khidm, from the Amr ibn Awf clan. There, the Prophet ﷺ would occasionally leave and go to the house of Saad ibn Haythamah, where he would sit and talk with other Muslims. As

255. The date coincides with September, 622 on the Gregorian Calendar.
256. *The full moon has ascended upon us.*
257. Bukhari, Manaqibu'l-Ansâr, 45.

Saad ﷺ was yet unmarried, the bachelors of the Migrants used to stay at his house, for which reason it came to be called *Manzil'ul-Uzzab*, the Place of Bachelors. (Ibn Hisham, II, 110; Ibn Saad, I, 233)

During his temporary stay at Quba, the Prophet ﷺ would attend funerals, invitations and visit the ill.

Abu Said al-Khudri ﷺ recalls the following from those days, which shows the sensitivity of the Companions.

"During the first days of the arrival of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Medina, we used to always notify him, whenever there would be someone on his deathbed. He would then come and wait by the person, praying for his forgiveness. Only after the person breathed his last would he return, sometimes waiting even until the burial.

Weary of causing him inconvenience, we said to each other:

'Let's not tell the Messenger of Allah anything until the ill person passes away. That way the Prophet will neither become tired nor will he lose any time.'

So we began telling the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the deceased only after the person breathed his last. He would then come and perform the salat of the deceased and pray for his forgiveness, waiting at times until the burial.

We continued doing this for some time. Then thinking even that was causing inconvenience for the Prophet ﷺ, we decided to take the funeral to his doorstep, supposing it would be easier for him to perform the salat over the deceased like that. So that's what we did from then on."

Muhammad ibn Omar, the narrator of the above account, adds:

"Such is the reason why that place is now called *Musalla*, meaning the place where the salat (of the deceased) is performed. The funerals were always taken there and the practice continued even after the passing away of the Prophet ﷺ." (Ibn Saad, I, 257, Hakim, I, 519/1349)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ had not yet departed from Quba when Ali -may Allah ennoble his countenance-, having returned to their owners the goods entrusted in the safekeeping of the Prophet ﷺ, caught up with them.

There are many reports that bear witness to the immensity of the love the Companions nurtured for the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his loving memory. Bara ibn Azib ﷺ[258] tells of his father's insatiable desire to listen to something about the Prophet ﷺ at every given opportunity:

258. Bara ibn Azib ﷺ, also known as Abu Ammara, was among the *Ansar*. He became Muslim before the Hegira and took active part in all the battles after Uhud. He breathed his last in Kufa, in the 73rd year of Hegira, having narrated more than 300 hadiths.

"Abu Bakr ﷺ had bought a saddle from my father for thirteen dirhams and told him:

'Ask Bara to deliver it to our house if he can'.

'Not until you describe to me how the Messenger of Allah migrated from Mecca to Medina', my father replied.

Thereupon Abu Bakr ﷺ lengthily described their Hegira to Medina." (Bukhari, Ashabu'n-Nabi, 2; Ahmad, I, 2)

The Masjid of Quba: A Masjid Founded upon Piety

At Quba, the first stop on the road to Medina, the Prophet ﷺ remained for fourteen days as guest at the quarters of the Ibn Awf clan. It was then that the illustrious Masjid of Quba was built, with the Noble Prophet ﷺ personally taking active part in the construction.

Quba is the first mosque of Islam and holds even greater importance for the fact of having been built during the Hegira. It is described in the Quran as:

لَمَسْجِدٌ اُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوٰى مِنْ اَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ

"…a masjid founded on piety from the very first day."[259] (at-Tawbah, 108)

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ states that the part of the *ayah* that says:

فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ اَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَّهِّرِينَ

"…in it are men who love that they should be purified; and Allah loves those who purify themselves", (at-Tawbah, 108) refers to the locals of Quba. (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 9/3099; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 23/44; Ibn Majah, Taharah, 357)

When the first group of Migrants reached Quba, they prepared the area formerly used by the Ibn Awf clan to dry their dates, for salat. Leading the first Migrants in their salat was Salim, the freed slave of Abu Huzayfah, a beautiful reciter of the Quran with more knowledge of it than anyone else there.[260]

Extending the area where the Migrants performed salat, the Noble Messenger ﷺ had the Masjid of Quba built. The square-shaped Masjid had originally a length of 32 meters on each side. The Prophet ﷺ asked the locals to bring stones, the first of

259. Omar ﷺ was to later adduce the Quranic expression 'the very first day' as proof, when making the Hegira the starting date of the calendar.

260. Ibn Saad, III, 87; IV, 311.

which he placed in the *Qiblah* with his own hands, thereafter instructing Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ to place the stones in the same order.

By far, it was Ammar ibn Yasir ﷺ who showed the most effort in the construction of the Mosque, for which he was called then on as 'the first mosque builder' in Islam.[261]

The poems Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ recited while working would help Muslims unwind amid their tiredness.[262]

Saad al-Qurazi took up the responsibilities as *muadhdhin* of the Mosque.

Like the Masjid'un-Nabawi and the other nine mosques in Medina, Quba provided a base for ongoing teaching activities, which the Prophet ﷺ supervised each time he attended the mosque.[263]

On Saturdays, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ would go to Quba, either on a mount or on foot, and offer two rakats of salat at the Mosque[264], something he also advised fellow Muslims to do:

"Whoever makes a thorough *wudu*, goes to the Masjid of Quba and performs two rakats of salat, shall receive the rewards of an *umrah* (voluntary pilgrimage)." (Ibn Majah, Iqamah, 197; Nasai, Masajid, 9)

Omar ﷺ also had the habit of visiting the Mosque on Mondays and Thursdays during his caliphate, saying he would not think twice in steering his camel to the mosque even it were a great distance away.[265]

The Masjid of Quba underwent extensions during the caliphates of Othman ﷺ and Omar ibn Abdulaziz, not to mention numerous renovations thereafter. Repaired also during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II in the year 1829 (H. 1245), the single minaret and flat-roofed mosque was torn down by the Saudi Arabian government and reconstructed with a dome and four minarets.

The First Friday Salat on the Valley of Ranunah

After a fourteen-day stint at Quba, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his following made their move towards Medina. It was Friday. By noon, with the time approaching zuhr salat, they had reached the Valley of Ranunah, where the Noble Prophet ﷺ dismounted his camel. There, for the first time, he led the salat of *Jumuah*, or Friday,

261. Ibn Hisham, II, 114.
262. Kâmil Mîras, *Tecrid Tercemesi,* X, 106.
263. Hamîdullâh, *İslâm Peygamberi,* II, 771.
264. Bukhari, Fadlu's-Salat 3, 4; Muslim, Hajj, 516.
265. Ibn Saad, I, 245.

the most prominent sign of Islam's sovereignty. He gave the following *khutbahs*, or sermons.

The First Sermon

"People!

"Repent before death! Perform good deeds while the opportunity is at hand! By offering plenty of charity, secretly or openly, and by constantly remembering Allah, mend your relations with Allah! Do this and you shall be blessed, assisted and be made to regain all that you have lost.

"Know that on this month of this year, in this place, Allah has made obligatory the Friday Salat. May his ends never meet, who takes the Salat lightly or abandons it in rejection, while there is an imam, just or unjust, to lead him, while I am still alive or after me! And may Allah never guide him to success! Such a person has no other salat (in hope of acceptance)—except those who repent, for Allah will accept their repentance." (Ibn Majah, Iqamah, 78)

"People!

"Prepare for your Hereafter while you have your health! Death will surely come to pass and leave your flocks without a shepherd. Then without a translator or a medium, Allah will ask:

'Has not my Prophet come to you and informed you of My commands? For all the wealth you had and My favors upon you, what have you brought today for yourself?'

"Faced with this question each person will look left and right to no avail; then they will look to the front and see Hellfire.

"So wake up! Guard yourselves from the flames, even if it be with half a date! If you cannot even find half a date, then with kind words; for a single goodness is multiplied by ten to seven hundred times.

"May Allah's blessings and mercy be upon you!" (Ibn Hisham, I, 118-119, Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 524)

The Second Sermo

"Praise be to Allah. Only from Him do I seek help. His protection we seek from the evils of our own souls and the wickedness of our deeds. Whoever Allah guides nobody shall misguide and nobody can guide whoever He causes to deviate.

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. He is one, without partner. The most beautiful words are in His Book. Whosoever's heart Allah has adorned with

the Quran and guided him to Islam after darkness, has been salvaged, if he chooses the Quran above all words.

"The book of Allah is truly the most beautiful and eloquent of words.

"Love what Allah loves! Do not ever be weary of Allah's word and His remembrance! Do not let your hearts strain from the word of Allah, for His words pick and choose from the best. They explain the best deeds, and give mention to the Prophets, the most eminent of servants, and convey the most beautiful and striking accounts.[266] It makes explicit the permissible and the non-permissible.

"Worship only Allah and do not ascribe any partners to Him! Fear Him the way He ought to be feared! Have your tongues support your good deeds! Love each other with the word of Allah! Know that Allah is angered with those who fall back on their words.

"May Allah's peace be upon you!" (Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 524-525)

Including aspects of Islam like belief, worship, moral and social principles, these sermons can effectively be taken as a broad summary of the Religion.

That the Friday Salat was made obligatory even before the completion of Hegira underlines the importance and urgency for Muslims to assemble themselves in a community.

The Nervous Wait in Medina

Before leaving Quba for Medina, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ summoned the Najjar Clan, among whom were his maternal uncles, for support. Armed, they quickly heeded the call, and greeting the Prophet ﷺ, they assuredly told him:

"Mount your camels for the journey. Your protection is assured."[267]

With the Friday Salat completed, accompanied by Abu Bakr ؓ, the notables of Najjar and other Muslims, the Noble Prophet ﷺ mounted his camel Qaswa to make his long awaited entrance into Medina.

The departure of the Prophet ﷺ and the pain of no longer being able to have him as guest slowly sinking in, the Qubans said in a heartfelt plea:

"Messenger of Allah! Are you leaving because you are tired of us or is it just that you're leaving for a better place?"

266. *Qissa*, accounts of previous prophets and peoples comprise more than a third of the Quran. For the inherent wisdom in this, refer to Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ, *Nebîler Silsilesi,* v. 1, p. 11-28, Istanbul 2004.
267. Bukhari, Manaqıbu'l-Ansâr, 46.

"I have only been commanded to go to Medina", the Prophet ﷺ replied, consoling them and assuring them of his contentment with their company. (Dyiarbakri, I, 339)

All the Medinan Muslims, without exception, wanted to lodge the Prophet ﷺ as guest. As that burning desire in each and every Muslim to take the noble guest home was threatening to turn into a dispute, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, referring to his camel Qaswa, had to intervene:

"Better you stay out of the camel's way; she has her instructions." (Ibn Hisham, II, 112-113)

This was the only way to avoid heartbreak in determining where the Noble Messenger ﷺ would end up lodging.

After a couple of temporary pauses, the gifted camel indeed ended up crouching on the vacant land in front of the home of Khalid ibn Zayd, better known as Abu Ayyub al-Ansari ؓ. The lucky companion was in an inexpressible bliss.

"Please, Messenger of Allah! Honor the house of your humble host!" said Abu Ayyub ؓ, immediately inviting the Prophet ﷺ in.

Walking towards Abu Ayyub's ؓ house, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was met with the little girls of the Najjar clan, singing merrily with drums in their hands:

نَحْنُ جَوَارٍ مِنْ بَنِى النَّجَّارِ
يَا حَبَّذَا مُحَمَّدٌ مِنْ جارِ

"*The bliss of being the daughters of the sons of Najjar,*
Compare little to being neighbors with the Messenger!"

The Beloved Messenger ﷺ then asked them:

"Tell me-do you love me?"

"Yes, we love you very much", they replied.

Delighted to see their joy, the Prophet ﷺ replied:

"Only Allah knows how much I love you all! By Allah, I love you all, too. By Allah, I love you all, too!" (Ibn Majah, Nikah, 21; Diyarbakri, I, 341)

Bara ibn Azib ؓ mentions the following:

"Never have I seen the Medinans happier than the day of the Prophet's ﷺ arrival. All Medinans, young and old, male and female, had flocked to the streets, climbed on their rooftops, shouting ecstatically, 'The Messenger of Allah has arrived! O Muhammad! O the Prophet of Allah!'" (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-ansar, 45; Muslim, Zuhd, 75)

Anas ibn Malik ﷺ recalls similar memories:

"I do not remember a day more joyful, more beautiful and with greater light than the day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ honored Medina. It was as if the whole town was bathed in light." (Ahmed, III, 122; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1/3618)

As a sign of their appreciation for the Prophet's ﷺ coming to Medina, the Medinan Muslims sacrificed a camel.[268]

The love the Believers nurture for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is expressed beautifully in the couplet below:

***Aman** is the same as your honorable name,*
*For a lover, O Prophet, your remembrance is **aman**…*

Both the expression *aman*, which is a plea of help, and the name Muhammad have the same *abjad* value of 92, poetically hinted at above in expressing that a lover's cry of *aman* is essentially a desire for none other than the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. A spectacular poetic insight indeed!

The Hegira marked the end of the Meccan era, signaling a brand new phase in Medina.

268. Ahmed, III, 301.

The Medina Period of Prophethood

CHAPTER THREE

THE FIRST YEAR OF HEGIRA

Days of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in Medina

The migration of the Prophet ﷺ to Medina marked a new era, turning a brand new page in history for Islam and the Muslims.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ was not a refugee in Medina. Much rather, he was the chief architect of a future world, its guide, the leader of the emerging Islamic state and, in short, its life and soul. With his arrival to Medina, the movement of Islam and its communication to the world received an enormous impetus.

Until the completion of the Mosque of Medina, the *Masjid'un-Nabi*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained as guest, for seven months, at the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. But the lodging at the house of Abu Ayyub, the flag bearer of the Prophet ﷺ, had in fact a history going back a few centuries.

Seven hundred years before, *Tubba'* Abu Karib, one of the kings of Yemen, had come to Medina, known then as Yathrib. Finding out from Jewish scholars of the future emergence of a Meccan Prophet who would then migrate to Medina, he had a house built in the town. He then entrusted a gold sealed letter with the grandest scholar in Medina at the time, requesting it be passed on, in case he did not live to see the day, from generation to another, and presented to the coming Prophet.[269]

And the *Tubba'*, as early as then, declared belief in the Prophet ﷺ and became Muslim.[270]

Passing on through the years from father to son, the house, which fell to the east of the *Masjid*, was finally handed down to Abu Ayyub Khalid ibn Zayd ؓ, reputed to be one of the descendants of the said scholar.

Those who had the *Tubba*'s letter in their safekeeping sent Abu Layla, a trustable man from the tribe of Sulaym, with the letter to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, upon hearing him approach Medina. Abu Layla tracked the Prophet ﷺ on the Meccan road; though it was the Blessed Prophet ﷺ who first called out.

"Are you Abu Layla?"

"Yes", he replied.

269. Ibn Asakir, III, 334-335; Samhûdî, I, 188-189.
270. Ahmad, V, 340.

"I believe you have the Tubba's letter with you. Can I see it?"

Abu Layla had never before seen the Prophet ﷺ. He was stunned.

"And who might you be? You certainly do not look like a sorcerer…Yet how did you know I have the letter?" he asked, astounded.

"Rest at ease, for I am Muhammad. Please, give me the letter," he said.

Taking out the letter, Abu Layla handed it over to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. After Abu Bakr ؓ read the letter aloud, the Messenger of Allah said, three times:

"Greetings to the *Tubba*, our virtuous brother!"

He then advised Abu Layla to return to Medina, who swiftly made his way back, delivering the good news of the Prophet's ﷺ approaching, for which he was offered a treat by each Medinan as a show of appreciation.[271]

Abu Ayyub al-Ansari: The Flagbearer of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ

Blessed with the honor of having the greatest of all Prophets ﷺ as guest for seven months in his warm double story home, Abu Ayyub ؓ at first constantly pleaded the Prophet ﷺ to stay on the top floor, only to have him respond each time:

"Rest assured, Abu Ayyub…The ground floor is better for us and more useful." Hence, the ground floor was where the Blessed Prophet ﷺ initially took up residence.

Serving their guest of honor, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with exceptional love and respect, Abu Ayyub ؓ and his family even would even brush up against the walls to sleep, uncomfortable with the idea of sleeping on the same vertical level with the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

Their jug broke once, spilling all the water on the floor. Worried that the water might drip on their sacred guest, Abu Ayyub at once grabbed their one and only cover, a velvet blanket, and anxiously began drying the floor. Come morning, he insisted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to move upstairs. As much as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ assured him that he was comfortable on the ground floor, Abu Ayyub ؓ politely persisted:

"We cannot go upstairs, until you do!" It was only then that they swapped places.[272]

Whilst they had the Noble Messenger ﷺ as guest, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari and his family would offer him from the meals they prepared. When the leftover food was

271. Ibn Asakir, III, 335; Aynî, IV, 176.
272. Muslim, Ashriba, 171; Ibn Hisham, II, 116.

returned, Abu Ayyub would search for the parts of the food which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had touched, specifically eating from those parts for *tabarruk*, in hope of attaining blessings therefrom. He had once sent the Blessed Prophet ﷺ a dish containing onions and garlic, which was returned untouched. Unable to see the Prophet's ﷺ imprints on the food, Abu Ayyub ؓ apprehensively went next to him and asked:

"Is that food impermissible, Messenger of Allah?"

"No, it is not", replied the Prophet of Grace ﷺ. "But I was not fond of its smell, for I am a man who speaks with angels."

"If you dislike it, then so do I", said Abu Ayyub.

"But you should eat it", the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised, however.

Nevertheless, that was the last time they cooked that particular meal for the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.[273]

How splendid a case in point this serves, in indicating the degree of sensitivity and thoughtfulness the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had in abstaining from causing the least amount of discomfort to all beings, humans and angels alike.

Abu Ayyub's ؓ honor and respect towards the Blessed Prophet ﷺ continued unalloyed even after his temporary stay. Just to be among those to reap the inherent blessings of the below words of the Prophet ﷺ :

"Constantinople will certainly be unlocked…How wonderul a commander is its commander; and how wonderful soldiers those soldiers are", (Ahmad, IV, 335; Hakim, IV, 468/8300), though well past eighty years of age, Abu Ayyub took part in two sieges of the coveted city, and as a vanguard of the ultimate conquest that was to take place many centuries down the track, gave his life for the cause. Moments before his passing away, as if to nominate his corpse as an object of ambition for Muslim soldiers to claim the city after him, he said, to those standing around:

"Bury me at the furthermost point you tread…"[274]

Anas ibn Malik's Service to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ

Anas ؓ recounts:

"As the Messenger of Allah ﷺ arrived in Medina, my step father Abu Talha took me by the hand and brought me next to him.

273. Muslim, Ashriba, 170-171; Ibn Hisham, II, 116.
274. See, Ibn Saad, III, 484-485.

'Anas is a smart little kid, Messenger of Allah', he said. 'Let him serve you!' And that is how I became a servant to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. All up, in war and peace, I served him for ten years. By Allah, neither did I ever hear him scold me for doing something I was not supposed to do nor for something I failed to carry out." (Muslim, Fadail, 52)

According to another account, Anas' entrance into the service of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ happened in the manner below:

When the Noble Messenger ﷺ graced Medina, all the *Ansari* men and women presented him with welcoming gifts. Ummu Sulaym, on the other hand, was rather downcast and depressed over not having anything to present. She later took her son Anas by the hand and together, they went next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. She asked:

"Would you see fit to let Anas serve you, Messenger of Allah?" The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave consent. (Samhudi, I, 271)

Anas ؓ explains:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once wanted to send me somewhere. Though I seemingly refused, saying 'No way, will I go', deep inside I had already agreed on going; after all, it was nobody other than the Prophet of Allah giving the order. So I set out. On the way, I saw some children playing on the street and I joined them awhile. Afterward, I felt someone come from behind me and gently hold the nape of my neck. When I turned around, I found the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, smiling.

'Did you end up going where I told you to go, little Anas?' he asked.

'I am going right away, Messenger of Allah!' I quickly responded." (Muslim, Fadail, 54)

Anas ؓ recalls another time:

"Once, after having seen to the service of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I went next to the kids outside, thinking he would be taking an afternoon nap. As I got carried away watching the children play, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned up. He greeted the children. He then called me and sent me somewhere. So I set off. He sat and waited under a shade until I returned. By the time I had completed my duty, I was late returning next to my mother; and when I eventually did, she asked:

'Why are you late?'

'The Messenger of Allah sent me somewhere for something', I said.

'What was it?' she inquired.

'It is the Messenger of Allah's secret', I replied.

'Then keep the Messenger of Allah's secret', she advised."

Thabit, who reported this *hadith* of Anas – ﷺ-, later added:

"Anas told me that 'If I were to reveal this secret to anyone, it would have been you!'" (Ahmad, III, 195)

As can be seen, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ treated children like his peers and trusted them with certain secrets. Nurturing a profound love and compassion for them throughout each phase of his life, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ had an affectionate appreciation of children, interacting with them at their own level, and virtually finding a way into their spirit. The blueprint of the ideal treatment of children is provided by, among many, the two *ahadith* below:

"If you have children, become a child with them…" (Daylami, III, 513)

"Treat your children nicely and perfect their rearing." (Ibn Majah, Adab, 3)

The exemplary life of the Prophet of Grace ﷺ also offers us guidance with respect to educating children. What superb education he must have given Anas that never in his life did he feel the need to get angry with the child, even once. What a way the fifty-five year old Prophet ﷺ must have found to the heart of the ten-year old Anas that he could joke with him, like a pal, when he felt, and let him in on a secret when needed; and reared in the care of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, despite being the child he was, Anas ﷺ could behave like a mature person and take the Messenger of Allah's secret to the grave. Elevating Anas ﷺ to such a level of maturity, no doubt, was the towering method of education implemented by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

The Pact of Brotherhood between the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar*: *Muakhat*

From the moment he started the Call, irrespective of the race or tribe they belonged to, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ regarded all those who entered Islam as equal and instituted among them the brotherhood of Islam. He twice established a *muakhat*, a pact of brotherhood, the first before the Hegira and the other after. The pact in Mecca involved setting up a brotherhood between the Muslims of Quraysh and the freed slaves. Zayd ibn Harithah and Hamza, for instance, were declared 'brothers', just as Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudayfah and Abu Ubaydah ibn Jarrah, and Bilal Habashi and Ubaydah ibn Harith ﷺ.[275]

Attached to one another from the very first years of Islam, Muslims showed a second display of brotherhood following the Hegira.

The moment the *Muhajirun* stepped foot inside Medina, a heated battle emerged between the *Ansar*, who were contesting each other enthusiastically, to

275. Ibn Seyyidinnâs, I, 321; Ibn Habîb, p.70; Ibn Abdilbar, *ad-Durar*, p. 90.

host their newly arrived brothers. The sweet dispute unsettled, they were eventually forced to draw lots to decide who would get to host who.[276] Five months after the arrival to Medina, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ designated for each *Muhajir* a brother from the *Ansar*; the venue for the declaration of the pact being the house of Anas ibn Malik ﷺ.[277]

Just to cite a few pairings, Abu Bakr was made a brother with Kharijah ibn Zayd, Omar with Utban ibn Malik, Abu Ubaydah with Saad ibn Muadh, Othman with Aws ibn Thabit,[278] Bilal Habashi with Abdullah ibn Abdurrahman,[279] Salman with Abu'd-Darda,[280] Salim with Muadh ibn Maiz,[281] and Ammar with Hudayfah[282] ﷺ. Taken into consideration in these pairings were the temperamental similarities of both persons.

Each immigrant family was boarded in the house of a Medinan. The Companions who were declared brothers were thus to work together and share what they earned. The *Ansar* donated their excess land to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who divided them amongst the *Muhajirun*. Still discontented, the *Ansar* went so far as to insist the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to:

"…divide our date fields among our immigrant brothers as well!"

"That cannot be", the Noble Prophet ﷺ said, upon which the *Ansar* then made the following proposal to the *Muhajirun*:

"Then you undertake the work of watering and taking care of the trees and we will split the harvest!" With the approval of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, both sides agreed to the deal. (Bukhari, Harth, 5)

This brotherhood was centered around the physical and spiritual assistance of Muslims who had left behind all they had in Mecca and migrated to Medina to start everything from scratch, by the *Ansar* of Medina welcoming them with open arms; motivated with the aim of making the *Muhajirun* forget the grief of having been driven out of their hometown only for their belief and of warming them to Medina, their new home, and fusing the Muslims together through a the founding of a mutual solidarity.

The pact, stemming purely from the love of *iman* and established far from pretension, had a far reaching content, extending to cover mutual rights, fairness and

276. Bukhari, Janaiz, 3; Manaqıbu'l-Ansar, 46.
277. Bukhari, Edeb, 67.
278. Ibn Hisham, II, 124-125.
279. Ibn Saad, III, 233, 234.
280. Bukhari, Adab, 67.
281. Ibn Abdilbar, II, 567.
282. Hakim, III, 435/5657.

assistance, including inheritance.[283] 'Brothers' were legal guardians and inheritors of one another. Although the pact of brotherhood remained in principle, the clause pertaining to inheritance was later amended by a Revelation subsequent to the Battle of Badr, which restricted inheritance solely to birth rights.[284]

Ibn Abbas ﷺ explains, in relation to the matter:

"Due to the brotherhood founded by the Messenger of Allah, a *Muhajir* had a right of inheriting the legacy of an *Ansari* brother, over and above his blood relations. But the *ayah*:

وَلِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِيَ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ

"And to every one We have appointed heirs of what parents and near relatives leave", (an-Nisa, 33) overruled this practice. With the subsequent part of the *ayah*:

وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَآتُوهُمْ نَصِيبَهُمْ

"…and as to those with whom your rights hands have ratified agreements, give them their portion", the rights of brotherhood between the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar* became limited to mutual aid, support and good will. Legal inheritance was thereby abolished. But a person could still voluntarily bequeath legacy, provided it did not exceed a third of his wealth." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 4/7; Abu Dawud, Faraid, 16/2922)

The *muakhat* served to put an end to the ensuing battle between *Aws* and *Khazraj*, the local tribes of Medina, and establish a brotherhood that ran deeper than blood. They could hardly wait for morning to arrive, just to see each other. Upon seeing each other, they would enthusiastically ask how they had been, as if they had not seen each other in years. Rarely would three days past before they visited one another. It was a brotherhood that attracted Divine praise, applauded by the Holy Quran.[285]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was laying the foundations of a Muslim society and state in Medina. Required first was thus the establishment of a social unity and solidarity, and no better could that be provided than mutual love and assistance. For that reason, the pact of brotherhood instituted by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ between the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar* proved to be the most important factor in shaping a society unparalleled in the history of mankind.

283. Bukhari, Kafala, 2; Adab, 67.
284. See, al-Anfal, 72-75; Bukhari, Faraid, 16.
285. See, al-Hashr, 9.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ founded the newly emerging Muslim society on no other basis than the brotherhood of Islam, not on a basis either tribal or racial, or a social categorization between free and slave, rich and poor, and the like. A Muslim society was constructed through blending people of immense social differences together.

Virtues of the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar*

A *muhajir*, denoting a person who migrates from one place to another, is the name given specifically to Meccan Muslims, who were forced by the unbearable increase of torment and oppression to leave to Medina.

The *Muhajirun* had left Medina, relinquishing all what they had behind except for the meager amount they could carry. The idolaters had immediately pounced on and seized their possessions in Mecca. The financial loss of the Muslims was indeed huge. But neither did they have their sights set on wealth, nor were they after any worldly gain; they had tasted the sweet zest of faith too much for that. Thus they were more than ready to sacrifice all of what they had in the way of Allah, glory unto Him.

They considered an imperative command even the slightest wish of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, constantly ready to be at his disposal, wholeheartedly putting their hands up with the words "may our parents be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah", which only echoed their feelings of devotion deep inside. One of the most striking examples of this state of mind is provided by Suhayb ibn Sinan, better known as Suhayb ar-Rumi ﷺ, who revealed where he kept his wealth hidden in Mecca, just to get away from the idolaters trying to prevent him from embarking on the Hegira. Having already been on the receiving end of the worst kinds of torment inflicted by the idolaters, Suhayb ﷺ set out to migrate to Medina right after Ali ﷺ, only to be thwarted by a group of Meccans who caught up with him on the way.

"You arrived in Mecca as a weak and poor man", they exclaimed. "Yet now have you ended up with loads of wealth. And now you want to take all of what you have and leave? It's not that easy!"

Suhayb immediately dismounted his horse, and taking out some arrows from his case, mounted a challenge:

"You very well know that I am one of the most talented bowmen among you. By Allah, if shooting all the arrows I have with me and then using my sword once I run out is what it takes, I will not shrink back…and so long as I have any of these in my hand, you will not be able to get within an inch of me. Only if you are able to seize hold of me once I am completely dispossessed of them, will you be able to do what you want with me. Now, if I tell you where my wealth is and leave you to do with it as you wish, will you clear my path and let me go?"

The idolaters accepted the offer. Thereupon Suhayb ﷺ made known to them where his wealth was kept and continued undisturbed on his journey. Around mid Rabiulawwal, he made it to Quba where he was reunited with the Noble Prophet ﷺ, accompanied at the time by Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ. In front of them was a bunch of newly picked Umm Jirzan dates brought by Kulthum ibn Khidm. Afflicted with sore eyes and extreme hunger from the journey, Suhayb ﷺ began helping himself to the dates, seeing which Omar ﷺ jokingly remarked:

"Look at Suhayb, Messenger of Allah. Having sore eyes does not prevent him from picking out fresh dates!" The Light of Being ﷺ joined in.

"So you are eating fresh dates even though you have sore eyes?"

"I saw the dates", Suhayb replied, "with the part of my eyes that is not sore!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ responded with a warm smile, and implying how Suhayb ransomed his wealth to the idolaters in return for his life, said:

"Suhayb is triumphant…Suhayb is triumphant. Rest assured Suhayb, your trade has turned out profitable!" (Ibn Sad, III, 226-230; Hakim, III, 450, 452)

While the Muslims of Mecca were exerting a great sacrifice under the hardest of conditions in trying to relocate to Medina, the Muslims of Medina were embracing them with the love of *iman*, as appropriate to the intensity of the struggle they were both in. Some *Muhajirun*, wishing not to be a burden on the *Ansar* who had not the least qualm in willing to share all they had with their immigrant brothers, appearing more than contended, were not accepting things that were being offered free of charge, while others were only accepting deals where they could work in the date fields of the *Ansar* thus earn their living with their own hands. Other immigrants had preferred to engage in what they knew best: trade. One of them was Abdurrahman ibn Awf ﷺ. Although Saad ibn Rabi ﷺ, his made brother, had offered him half his wealth, he refused:

"May Allah prosper your wealth and grant your family wellbeing. Suffice for you to show me where the market of Medina is", he said. Beginning his business venture in this manner, he became wealthy in a very short time. (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 3)

The *Muhajirun*, the first recipients of Revelation, who winked at all the risks that came with believing in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and as a consequence underwent the most unthinkable forms of torture to the point of ultimately being forced to leave their homes, are honored with the praise of the Allah, glory unto Him. Even though they did not have any worldly gain waiting for them, still, they

had abandoned their all, simply for the opportunity to live in line with their religion. Thus not only were the *Muhajirun* showing an exemplary instance of selflessness, they were at the same time carrying out a religious obligation, for the Quran was condemning those remaining behind from embarking on the Hegira despite having the means.[286]

Allah, glory unto Him, pledges to forgive the sins of the *Muhajirun* and award them with Paradise:

فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُوذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا
وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ وَاللهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ

"Those who have left their homes, or have been driven out therefrom, or have suffered harm in My Cause, or have fought or have been slain,- verily, I will blot out from them their iniquities, and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath! A reward from the presence of Allah and from His presence is the best of rewards." (Al-i Imran, 195)

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوا ثُمَّ جَاهَدُوا
وَصَبَرُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"But verily to those who leave their homes after trials and persecutions, and who thereafter strive and fight for the faith and patiently persevere… Your Lord, after all this is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." (an-Nahl, 110)

In connection, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ states:

"The *Muhajirun* will enter Paradise seventy years before others and avail of themselves of its blessings…whereas people will be made to wait just to be called into account." (Haythami, X, 15)

Destined for great rewards in the Hereafter, the *Muhajirun* at the same time have been graced with many Divine blessings in this life, consequent upon the sacrifices they have shown:

286. See, an-Nisa, 97.

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَأَجْرُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

"To those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, after suffering oppression…We will assuredly give a goodly home in this world; but truly the reward of the Hereafter will be greater. If only they realized (this)!" (an-Nahl, 41)

Again, in consequence of the troubles they suffered, the Almighty reserved for them a greater portion of the spoils compared to others. The Quran, in relation, declares:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

"Some part is due to the poor Muhajirun, those who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking Grace from Allah and His Good Pleasure, and aiding Allah and His Messenger. Such are indeed the sincere ones!" (al-Hashr, 8)

Over and above the homesickness that took hold of them upon their arrival, the *Muhajirun* for a long time were also unable to get used to Medina's weather, struck down by fever and illnesses alike. Witnessing the deteriorating health of both her father Abu Bakr and Bilal Habashi ﷺ-, aggravated all the more by their longing of Mecca, Aisha – ﷺ- made the Light of Being ﷺ aware of the predicament, upon which he then prayed:

"Allah…Endear Medina to us just how You endeared Mecca; even more! Grant prosperity to her harvest! Allah…Improve Medina's weather and send her fever and malaria to Juhfah!"[287] (Bukhari, Fadail'ul-Medina, 12; Muslim, Hajj, 480)

The gallant Muslims of Medina who welcomed the troubled *Muhajirun* arriving from Mecca, generously sharing with all their resources, and who moreover gave their affectionate support to the cause of the Noble Prophet ﷺ are called *Ansar*, meaning the Helpers.

287. Juhfah, then, was an area inhabited by Jews and idolaters, persistent in helping the enemies of Islam in their transgressions against Muslims and sowing the seeds of hostility. By praying in such manner, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ wished for them to be too preoccupied with the plague to even think about aiding the idolaters of Mecca and causing mischief. (Aynî, X, 251)

Ghaylan ibn Jarir ﷺ explains:

"I once asked Anas ﷺ, 'Was the title *Ansar* used to describe you before, or was it given to you by Allah?' and he answered, 'The name was given to us by Allah.'" (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 1)

The Ansar consisted of two rival Medinan tribes of the same kin, Aws and Khazraj. In the 11th year of Prophethood, a delegate of six persons from Khazraj came to Medina to ensure the aid of Quraysh against Aws with whom they had locked horns. There, they met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his invitation to Islam, as a result of which they became Muslim. On their return to Medina, in hope that it might put an end to the chronic hostilities between them and unite them like the brothers they once were, Khazraj also successfully invited Aws to Islam. Thus the weariness left on their hearts at the end of ensuing warfare waged over long years suddenly turned to unity and strength, thanks to the *silm*, that is to say the peace and tranquility of Islam. Joining forces once again, the two kindred tribes sent their representatives to Mecca in the 12th and 13th years of Prophethood, occasioning the First and Second Pledges of Aqabah.

In the second of these pledges, they made a vow to protect and aid the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims of Mecca provided they migrated to Medina, playing thereby a major part in Hegira and hence the beginning of a new era in Islam.

When designated by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ as a brother for each *Muhajir*, every *Ansar* made his brother partner to his home, work and property, and whatever he had, revealing an exemplary and incomparable instance of solidarity beyond anything one could dream to expect from his own birth brother. The sincerity of the *Ansar* is acclaimed by the Quran below:

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّؤُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

"But those who before them, had homes in Medina and had adopted the Faith, who show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the latter, but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their own lot. And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls…" (al-Hashr, 9)

The following incident, reported to have occasioned the above Revelation, truly captures the depth of *Ansari* sacrifice:

A man reduced with extreme hunger had come to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asking for help.

"Who wants to take his brother as guest?" asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"I will, Messenger of Allah", said Abu Talha, ؓ, from the *Ansar*, and took the poor man to his house. Upon arrival, he quickly went inside by himself, and said to his wife, "Let's prepare something for the guest of the Prophet of Allah", before asking, "Have we anything to eat?"

"No", replied his wife, "apart from a few morsels enough too feed the kids."

"Then distract the kids. If they come afterwards asking for food, put them to sleep. And once our guest comes inside, put out the light without making it obvious. We will then make it look like as if we're joining him for the meal."

So they sat for the meal. The guest ate, while they ended up sleeping on an empty stomach. Come morning, Abu Talha went next to the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who upon seeing him, said:

"Allah was pleased with what you did for your guest last night." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 59/6; Muslim, Ashribah, 172-173)

When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ arrived in Medina, the *Muhajirun* told him:

"Never, Messenger of Allah, have we seen a people more generous and charitable than this tribe to whom we have immigrated. Their rich give in loads and their poor provide help, running to our needs. They have entirely taken care of our financial worries and have made us partners to their properties. We fear they might sweep clean all of Allah's rewards".

"Do not worry", assured the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. "So long as you pray to Allah on behalf of them and thank them in return for what they do, you too will obtain rewards." (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 44/2487)

Recalling the below incident is Jabir ؓ:

"Upon collecting the dates, the *Ansar* would divide them into two heaps, piling more on one side than the other. Then placing some date leaves over the smaller pile to make it look more sizable than the other, they would tell the *Muhajirun* to take whichever pile they preferred. And they, wishing for their *Ansari* brothers to take the greater pile, would choose the supposedly smaller pile, through which they would end up with most of the dates. The *Ansar* would have their wishes fulfilled by sparing for their own the smaller pile. This generous deed of the *Ansar* continued until the capture of Khaybar." (Haythami, X, 40)

Another example of altruism shown by the *Ansar* towards their immigrant brothers runs as thus:

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had first summoned the *Ansar* to distribute among them, in lots, the land of Bahrain. But the *Ansar* renounced their rights:

"Please, Messenger of Allah", they said "do not give us anything until you give twice as much to our brothers of the *Muhajirun*!"

"Since, *Ansar*, you prefer others over yourselves", replied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ "then be patient until you unite with me by the Pool of Kawthar…for after me there will come a time when others will be preferred over you!" (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar,)

The spirit of *Ansar* has received the personal praise of the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

"As far as I can see, you grow in number when called to battle or to help the needy, and come in crowds. Yet, when you are called to be given things worldly, you reduce in number and desist." (Ali al-Muttaqi, XIV, 66)

In return for the selflessness with which they embraced the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the *Muhajirun* who had immigrated to their town, the *Ansar* are rewarded with Paradise, but more importantly, with the grace of Allah, glory unto Him.

Thus states the *ayah*:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
رَّضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِى تَحْتَهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

"The vanguards of Islam- the first of those who forsook their homes and of those who gave them aid, and also those who follow them in all good deeds,- well-pleased is Allah with them, as are they with Him: for them He has prepared gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever: that is the supreme felicity." (at-Tawba, 100)

The *Ansar* did not hold back from putting their lives on the line in defending Islam and protecting the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. They were gallant in the Battle of Badr. In the Battle of Uhud, during the dire moments in which the Believers were assailed from behind and the tide of victory had turned against them, most of the Companions who formed a human shield around the Blessed Prophet ﷺ were *Ansari*. They were attached to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ with legendary love and loyalty, the intensity of which the emotional episode below recounted by Anas ﷺ vividly bears out:

"I was on a journey with Jarir ibn Abdullah[288]. Despite being older than me, he was serving me; and when I told him to stop doing that, he said, 'I saw the great

288. Jarir ibn Abdillah ﷺ was the leader of the Bajila tribe of Yemen. Accompanied by 150 men, he came to

service lent by the *Ansar* to the Messenger of Allah, and I promised myself that if I ever became close friends with an *Ansari* I would serve him." (Bukhari. Jihad, 71; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahaba, 181)

"Had there never been a Hegira", once said the Noble Messenger ﷺ "I too would have been an *Ansari*", expressing their immense value in his sight. (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 2)

Some of the other words articulated by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in acclaim of the virtue of the *Ansar* include:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Hereafter ought not to be spiteful towards the *Ansar*." (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 25/3906)

"Only Believers love them and only hypocrites hate them. Allah loves those who love the *Ansar* and is spiteful towards those who hate them." (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 25/3900)

"Humans increase yet the *Ansar* decrease; and so they will, like salt in a meal." (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 11)

"I advise you to treat the *Ansar* nicely. They are my people, confidants and my faithful. They have appropriately fulfilled their obligation. The rewards for their services have not yet been fully given (impending, more than sufficiently, in the Hereafter). Therefore, be nice towards their good, forgive their wrongdoers." (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 11)

The profound love the Noble Prophet ﷺ nurtured for the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar* extended to his entire Companions; such that each Companion sincerely believed that there was nobody dearer to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ than himself.

Ka'b ibn Ujra ؓ narrates the evocative incident below:

"We were sitting at the Mosque in Medina in the presence of the Messenger of Allah. Seated was a small group each from the *Ansar* the *Muhajirun* and the clan of Hashim. Amongst each other, we wondered which one of us the Messenger of Allah loved the most. We, the *Ansar*, remarked:

'We believed in the Messenger of Allah, obeyed him and fought by his side against his enemies. So for those reasons, he loves us more!'

Medina and became Muslim in the month of Ramadan, in the 10th year of Hegira, three months before the passing away of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. He loved the Messenger of Allah ﷺvery much. The affection was mutual, as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would smile at Jarir every time he saw him.

Our brothers of the *Muhajirun* responded:

'We immigrated for the sake of Allah and His Messenger and turned our backs on our families and wealth in their way. Besides, we took part in all the battles you did. The Messenger of Allah therefore loves us more!'

Members of the Hashim clan then said:

'We are the Prophet's kin, who have taken part in all the battles you have. So the Messenger of Allah would certainly have a greater love for us!'

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ thereupon came next to us and inquired:

'What was it that you were talking about amongst each other before?'

Each of us repeated what we said before, to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ commented:

'You have all spoken the truth…who could claim otherwise?' Then after a brief pause, he asked, 'Would you like for me to settle the matter?'

'Of course, we would', replied we. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then stated, 'You, the *Ansar*…I am your brother!'

'*Allah-u Akbar*!' exclaimed the Ansar jubilantly. 'By the Lord of the Kaabah, we have won him over!'

'People of the *Muhajirun*', then said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. 'I am from you!'

The *Muhajirun*, too, happily exclaimed, '*Allah-u Akbar*! 'By the Lord of the Kaabah, we have won him over!'

'As for you, the sons of Hashim', then continued the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, 'You are from me and have come to me!' They likewise exclaimed:

'*Allah-u Akbar*! By the Lord of the Kaabah, we have won him over!' We all left satisfied. Each group was delighted with the compliments of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ." (Haythami, X, 14)

The borders of the small Muslim city-state founded in Medina, comprised approximately of four-hundred families, reached Iraq and Palestine, only in a matter of ten years. The Companions were at war with Byzantine and Persia at the time of the passing away of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, though their standards of living had little changed as compared to ten years before. They continued persisting in their lives of abstinence. Excess consumption, greed, luxury and pomp were things unknown to the Companions, who were filled with a constant awareness, that 'awaiting the flesh, tomorrow, is but the grave.' They therefore always fled the tendency of reserving the pleasures of the world to themselves and an indulgence in them. With the excitement

and zest of *iman*, they instead used them as means for guiding humankind to its salvation. They molded their lives in the cast of seeking the pleasure of Allah, glory unto Him. Without a doubt, one of the most prominent reasons for the clear and rapid spread of Islam among the oppressed and the exploited, like a glaring flash of morning light, was the fact that the Companions showed a perfect Muslim character wherever they stepped foot. The elite students of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Companions were Believers par excellence, honest and just, carrying treasures of benevolence in their hearts enlightened by the Prophetic light, who looked upon fellow servants of the Almighty only with eyes of compassion.

Madinat'un-Nabi and the Contract of Medina

Falling to the north of Medina and enclosed by mountains on three sides and a plain in the south, Medina is beautiful town with luscious greenery provided by an abundance of date gardens, arable land and pleasant climate.

Residing in the town at the time of the Hegira were two Arab tribes, Aws and Khazraj, in addition to three Jewish tribes, in Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir and Banu Qurayza. The Arabs had come to Medina from Yemen following the great *Sayl'ul-Arim* flood, while the Jews were originally refugees from Jerusalem, having fled Roman oppression following their incursion into the city.

Over time, tension prevailed between the Arabs and Jews, as a result of which the Jews were defeated by the Arabs who gained the upper hand in Medina. But with the Jews sowing the seeds of enmity between the Arabs, soon Aws and Khazraj found themselves in recurring war with each other, the last of which was the Battle of Buath. Casualties on both fronts, however, in a war that sporadically spanned over a hundred-and-twenty years and came to an end only five years prior to the Hegira, had decimated both tribes. Especially at the time of the Hegira, the Jews had therefore a financially commanding position in the town.

The graceful arrival of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in Medina therefore meant, with the blessings of the Almighty, the end of spite and enmity between the two kindred tribes.

Allah, glory unto Him, declares:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

"And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited, and remember the favor of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favor you became brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it, thus does Allah make clear to you His communications that you may follow the right way." (Al Imran, 103)

Briefly after the Hegira, the Meccan idolaters wrote intimidating and provoking letters to both the idolaters and Jews of Medina, in hope of preventing the Muslims from settling and gaining power in the town. The threats in one of these letters directed at Abdullah bin Ubayy and the idolaters from *Aws* and *Khazraj* flanked by his side, is loud and clear:

"You have one of our men with you. Either you kill him or drive him out of your town, or else we will march on you with all the tribes of Arabia, put your men to our swords and take your wives for our amusement!"

Abdullah ibn Ubayy, backed by the Madinan idolaters then made a move to confront the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Informed of the situation from beforehand, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ acted first and went to them before they did.

"It seems the threats hurled by the Quraysh have gotten to you. Know that the harm they may inflict on you is no greater than the harm you may incur by fighting us! Or are you intent on fighting your own sons and brothers and killing them?"

They eventually dispersed. (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 22-23/3004; Abdurrazzaq, V, 358-359)

The intimidations and provocations hailing from Mecca had proven futile. But then again, it was well within possibility that the frustrated Quraysh would strike Medina when least expected and massacre all the Muslims, Jews and idolaters indiscriminately. This common threat resulted in the crowding together of the non-Muslim community of Medina around the leadership of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

On a side note, since times old, Aws, Khazraj and the Jews were contesting each other to be the sole authority in the town. The Khazraj, for instance, were getting prepared to declare their leader Abdullah ibn Ubayy the ruler of Medina, despite the well known fact that Aws -or Khazraj for that matter- could never stomach a leader from a rival tribe. In that respect, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ proved to be a uniting figure for all the dwellers of Medina.

Under these circumstances, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ assumed leadership of the town. Having already established brotherhood between Aws and Khazraj and thus the social order amongst Believers through the *muakhat*, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, without further ado, also inducted the local Jews as citizens of Medina with a written document, establishing certain principles that could virtually be regarded as the constitution of the City State of Medina. Some of the principles contained in the

document known as the Contract of Medina, an official registration of the founding of the Islamic State, were as follows:

"*Bismillahi'r-Rahmani'r-Rahim*,

1. Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib (Medina), their dependants and those who struggle with them are an *ummah* distinct from other communities.

2. There is not to be any mischief and harm. Pious Believers will rally against one who transgresses, seeks to oppress and violate rights, who sins, cultivates enmity and incites malice between Believers. Even if he be one of their own, they will rise against him as one.

3. Murder is not to be committed. Given it has been committed, both the *Muhajirun* and each family of Medina shall pay their blood money mutually to each other, as determined by custom. Each side shall pay the ransom of their captives mutually, in line with the principles of justice evident amongst Muslims.

4. The Believers are not to leave those with large families or the indebted to deal with their troubles on their own and will pay their ransom or blood money, within the principles of justice apparent to both sides.

5. Security is to be reinforced within Medina and without. Both inhabitants and foreigners shall feel safe and sound. Excepted are those who oppress or commit a crime.

6. Jews shall enjoy a freedom of faith and freely remain in their religion, just as Muslims shall remain in theirs. Our subjects among the Jews shall receive aid free of injustice and joint opposition against them. If a war breaks out, then all sides are to assist each other. As long as they continue fighting alongside Muslims, Jews are to share the expenses of warfare.

7. Neither side is to take idolaters under their wings. Neither Quraysh nor their allies shall be provided refuge in any way whatsoever.

8. Warfare in Medina is prohibited. Inner Yathrib Valley is a safe haven for all who are obliged under these clauses. In case of a foreign incursion, each side is then to protect its own area. A peace accepted by one side is a peace accepted by all. Throughout the battle, Jews are to cover their own expenses and Muslims their own; though they are to aid one another and do what is right against the assailants and let goodness prevail in their mutual aid. No side shall do any harm to each other and must aid the oppressed under all circumstances.

9. If a disagreement should arise, then the case is to be presented to Allah and His Messenger, whose verdict is to be considered binding.

10. Allah's pledge and assurance are on equal par and they cover even the most despised; for Muslims are distinct from others in being comrades and companions of each other.

11. No Jew is to embark on a military expedition without the consent of Muhammad ﷺ.

There is no doubt that Allah, the Almighty, will be pleased with those who are sensitive to abstain from infringing the clauses specified in this page, who embody the good and the right. These clauses will certainly not prevent the exacting of punishment to the oppressor or the guilty.

Allah, glory unto Him, will provide protection for those who thrive in goodness and desist evil. Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah." (Ibn Hisham, II, 119-123; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 263-264; Hamidullah, al-Wasaiq, p. 57-64)

It is evident that the clauses are of necessity in implementing Islamic rules in society. The Contract of Medina, a pact of citizenship, is the most decisive answer to the false allegations that Islam is a religion lacking legislative functions and a social drive, merely making do with regulating worship.

A multifaceted agreement carrying political, economical, social and religious import, the Contract of Medina places accent on Islam as the sole element providing unity amongst Muslims, who in turn must imperatively provide mutual aid for each other, uphold justice and impartiality in all their dealings and seek the arbitration of Allah and His Messenger, should a disagreement arise.

The Contract limits and regulates the purely tribal solidarity prevalent among Arabs with the principle of justice, commanding the punishment of the guilty even if they be of kin. By virtue of giving Jews the rights of property and religious belief, the Contract also bears witness to the incredible depth of justice upheld by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Had the Jews not violated the Contract of their own doing, it would have continued to hold sway for a while to come.

The Declaration of Medina as a Sanctuary

The Contract was followed by determining the borders of the *Haram*, or the sanctuary, of Medina, in the following words of the Noble Prophet ﷺ:

"Ibrahim عليه السلام had declared Mecca a *haram*, and so do I declare between the two hilltops of Medina *haram*." (Ahmad, IV, 141)

By erecting stones in the prescribed hilltops, the borders of the sanctuary of Medina were thus established. Medina, as determined between these borders, was thereafter the called *al-Haram'ur-Rasul*, the Sanctuary of the Prophet ﷺ. Each

corner of the three *farsah* area between the hills of Ayr and Sawr was made into a grove.[289] (Bukhari, Fadail'ul-Medina, 1; Muslim, Hajj, 471-472)

After proclaiming Medina a sanctuary, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ then added:

"Neither shall a tree be cut down, nor a sin committed within these borders. Whoever commits a deed contrary to the Book and Sunnah shall incur the curse of Allah, the angels and the entire humankind." (Bukhari, Fadail'ul-Medina, 1)

Lifting his hands aloft, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ then prayed for the wellbeing of the town, owing to the grace of which Medina has since been a haven of peace, serenity and mercy for entire Believers and a town of happiness, effectively the pulse of the Muslim world.

The Companions considerately observed the distinct status of Medina throughout, as verified by the sensitivity of Abu Hurayra ﷺ below:

"If I saw a deer grazing by the pastures of Medina, there is no way I would disturb it, for I heard the Messenger of Allah declare the area between the stony places of Medina a sanctuary." (Muslim, Hajj, 471)

Not only that, the Companions would not even tolerate their children behaving in a manner inappropriate to the essence of Medina, as vividly recounted by Abdullah ibn Ubada ﷺ:

"I was once hunting birds near the Abu Ihab Well. My father saw me and immediately made me release the bird I had caught, saying, 'the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has declared the area between the stony spots of Medina a sanctuary, just as Ibrahim عليه السلام had declared Mecca.'" (Ibn Asir, Usdu'l-Ghaba, III, 159)

The Medina Market and the Regulation of Commercial Life

Upon arriving in Medina, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ pointed to a different market place than that of the Jews, and insisted Muslims do their business there. It is a well known fact, after all, that separate market places are vital for acquiring commercial independence.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ took close interest in the market and commercial life of Medina, inspecting both the goods and merchants.

One day, he went next to a merchant by the market. Dipping his hands into the pile of wheat on the counter, he felt some moistness underneath, and inquired the reason.

"It was from the rain, Messenger of Allah", explained the merchant.

289. This is the area that falls between mount Ayr near Dhulhulayfa and Sawr, the small hilltop to the north of Uhud. This Sawr Hill should not be confused with Mount Sawr near Mecca.

"Could not have you put the moist part above where everybody could see?" counseled the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, adding "A cheater has nothing to do with me!"

Qays ibn Abi Garaza ؓ tells:

"During the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, we were still called 'brokers', up until the time he came next to us in the market and gave us the better name of 'merchants' and advised, 'Merchants, know that lies and oaths smear their marks on trades, so mix some charity into it!'" (Ahmad, IV, 6; Abu Dawud, Buyu', 1/3326)

Despite the enormity of care a person may take, forgetfulness and ignorance are bound to creep up in dealings and cause injustice. Thus, as a precaution, one ought to take measure by giving lots of charity from what is earned, the precise thing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ highlights in the above hadith.

Rifaa ibn Rafi ؓ says:

"We were going to *Musalla*,[290] one day, with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who on the way happened to a see a group of people trading. 'Merchants', he called out, to which the group heeded by looking towards his way. 'In the Hereafter traders (*tajir*) are most certainly resurrected as traitors (*fajir*)…Excepted are those who fear Allah, do what is good and give out charity.'" (Tirmidhi, Buyu, 4/1210)

Concerning the morals that ought to prevail in commerce, the Prophet of Grace ﷺ elaborates the below account which took place long ago between two virtuous men from the people of Israel:

"A man, before you, once bought a land from someone, and later found a pot of gold in the land. Carrying the pot in his hand, he returned to the man from who he had purchased the property and said:

'Take your gold, for I only bought the land from you, not the gold inside!'

'Never; for I sold you the land including all that was inside!' replied he.

Unable to settle the dispute, they designated another man to arbitrate. After hearing them out, the arbitrator asked:

'Have you any children?' It turned out one of the men had a son, while the other a daughter.

'Then wed them to each other', the arbitrator suggested, 'and spend the gold on them and give the rest out to charity.'" (Bukhari, Anbiya, 54; Muslim, Aqdiyya, 21; Ibn Maja, Luqata, 4)

290. *Musalla* is a name given to a large area reserved for the purpose of accommodating Friday, *eid* or funeral salats, in congregation, in a given community. *Musalla*s were originally set up in the outskirts of towns to host major communal salats, such as that of Friday or *eid*, in place of other mosques. It would thereby enable at least a weekly gathering of the entire residents of a town.

An able merchant who had set out on long commercial journeys in his youth, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ proclaimed certain principles in the field upon his arrival at Medina. Some of his words on trade include:

"Nine tenths of income is in trade." (Suyuti, I, 113)

"The most permissible and best of what a person eats is that which he has earned with his own hands." (Ibn Maja, Ticarat, 1)

To be sure, in addition to its physical influence, food also exercises a spiritual influence. Each morsel consumed, whether it has come from a permissible, impermissible or even a doubtful avenue, seizes control of our spirits. The nature of what we eat affects our sensitivities. Alluding to the importance of permissibly acquired money in all deeds of worship, the hadith below, taking *hajj* or pilgrimage as a case in point, states:

"Whosoever visits the House with money acquired through impermissible (*haram*) means has departed from obeying Allah. Such a person, after enshrouding himself in the *ihram* places his foot on the stirrup of his camel and shouts '*labbayk Allahumma labbayk*', only to receive a rejoinder from the Heavens, 'no *labbayk* to you, nor a *sadayk*, for your earnings, your provisions, even your camel is illicit; so return as a sinner without earning any rewards, and grief over the calamities you shall face.'

But if a person sets on *hajj* with money earned permissibly and placing his foot on the stirrup of his camel exclaims '*labbayk Allahumma labbayk*', he is met with a reply from the Heavens, '*labbayk* and *sadayk*…I respond to you, for your camel is licit (*halal*), as are your clothes and provision. So return with having earned loads of rewards, away from the smear of sin; and be joyful, for what is awaiting that will grant you happiness and bliss!'" (Haythami, III, 209-210)

Being an important and often violated matter, the door to the impermissible in earnings has been shut with the Divine proclamations specified in al-Baqara, immediately after *shirk*, that is ascribing partners to Allah, glory unto Him. Such that even al-Anam, al-Araf, Yunus and an-Nahl, *suwar* revealed in the Meccan period which therefore do not comprise a great deal of legal judgments, provide clarification regarding what is permissible and impermissible, immediately after *ayat* communicating the nature of a sound belief in the Almighty.[291]

Emphasizing the need of courage and honesty in trade, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ says:

291. al-Anâm, 136-152; al-Arâf, 32-33, 169; Yûnus, 59-60; an-Nahl, 95, 115-116. See, Draz, *an-Nabau'l-Azîm,* p. 193.

"A brave merchant who puts his goods up for sale is provided for, while a black-marketer is cursed." (Ibn Majah, Ticarat, 6)

"A coward merchant is deprived, while a brave merchant is provided for." (Daylami, II, 79)

Some further commercial principles instated by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, are explained in the below two *ahadith*:

"A buyer and a seller are free to change their minds, so long as they do not leave each other's presence. If they contract an honest deal, where they make known everything as it is, their trade is made prosperous. But given they hide some things and lie, prosperity flees their trade." (Bukhari, Buyu, 19; Muslim, Buyu)

"Oaths attract attention to goods, though they divest it of prosperity." (Bukhari, Buyu, 26; Muslim, Musaqat, 13)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ banned such practices as intercepting the goods before they arrived at the market place, completely concluding the deal before the goods reached their owner, selling goods prior to having possession of them, bidding for goods despite an already concluded deal and inciting opposition between customers.[292]

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, stressing the need of adopting an easygoing attitude in trade, states:

"May Allah abundantly grant His Mercy to a person generous and lenient in buying, selling and in accepting an outstanding debt." (Bukhari, Buyu, 16)

"Allah dealt with a person, who lived before you, with mercy, for no other reason than that the person would show leniency in buying, selling and when soliciting the money owed to him." (Tirmidhi, Buyu', 75/1320)

Being lured by greed and the dazzle of the world and supposing there is more to be earned by disobeying the guidelines set by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ only incurs the danger of poverty in the Afterlife. Honest merchants striving to gain the pleasure of the Almighty and provisions for the Hereafter, on the other hand, are subject to the wonderful news of the Prophet ﷺ:

"A Muslim merchant, honest and trustworthy, will be among the martyrs in the Hereafter." (Ibn Maja, Ticarat, 1)

The *Masjid'un-Nabi* and the Building of the House of the Prophet ﷺ

There was no mosque in Medina at first and the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to offer salat wherever he saw fit. It was not long after he had a second mosque built after Quba, the *Masjid'un-Nabi* that stands today.

292. See, Bukhari, Buyû, 70-72; Muslim, Buyû, 29.

Upon arriving in Medina, Qawsa, the camel of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, crouched on a patch of land adjacent to quarters of the Najjar Clan left vacant for drying dates, which belonged to two orphans of the clan, Sahl and Suhayl. Descending from his camel, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ then declared:

"Allah willing, this will be our spot!" Inquiring the owners of the land, he was informed by Muadh ibn Afra ﷺ of their owners. Sending for Sahl and Suhayl afterward, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ bid the orphans to put up a price for the land, so he could purchase it off them.

"No way, Messenger of Allah", responded the youths. "We can only do as much as grant the land to you as present and expect out rewards from none other than Allah!"

But the Blessed Messenger ﷺ did not accept their generous offer and purchased the land after paying its price. (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 45, Salat 48; Muslim, Masajid, 9)

The land had some graves belonging to idolaters, small mounds here and there and date trees. The graves were dug up and the bones were relocated elsewhere, the mounds were leveled up and the trees were cut.[293] The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then ordered some mud bricks be cast for the construction.[294]

During the construction, the Noble Messenger ﷺ took to the work of carrying the bricks with his Companions, saying, at the same time:

"This burden is not the burden of Khaybar, but the best and cleanest deed that can be offered to Allah." (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 45)

Through these words, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was indicating that the work they were carrying out had no worldly ends, inherent with much greater benefit than goods like dates and raisins people imported from Khaybar for commercial purposes.

A Companion carrying soil came upon the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who himself had a mud brick in his hand, and urged him to let him carry the brick instead, only to be met with the answer:

"Better you go and grab another brick, for you do not stand in greater need for Allah than I!" (Samhudi, I, 333)

Spiritual responsibility and the incentive to encourage fellow Muslims to work had the Blessed Prophet ﷺ personally laboring in the construction,[295] which inspired

293. Muslim, Masajid, 9.

294. Ibn Saad, I, 239.

295. The Prophet's ﷺ attitude is exemplary of the ideal conduct those in administrative positions should exert: to be the forerunner, at all times, in carrying out all responsibilities and avoiding the arrogance of taking a responsibility lightly, however small it may seem. Deriving utmost benefit from

the Companions to remark, "…relaxing while the Prophet labors will only lead us astray". (Ibn Hisham, II, 114)

Present during the construction was a man from Hadramawt, skillful in mixing and casting mud bricks, who received the personal praises of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

"May Allah have mercy on one who executes his art with perfection. Continue doing your work, for I see you are good at it!" (Samhudi, I, 333; Diyarbakri, I, 344)

Allah, glory unto Him, too, wills Believers to execute all their deeds with perfection, commanding in the *ayah* وَأَحْسِنُوٓاْ, "…do your works perfectly", which is immediately followed by "…for Allah loves those who carry out (their works) with perfection." (al-Baqara, 195)

While carrying mud bricks shoulder to shoulder with his Companions during the construction of the *Masjid*, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ also repeated the following words, originally articulated by another Companion:

"Allah…The true reward is that of the Hereafter. Have mercy on the *Ansar* and *Muhajirun*!" (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar, 45)

While everybody else was carrying the bricks one by one, Ammar ibn Yasir ﷺ was carrying them two at a time, one for himself and the other on behalf of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Upon seeing his diligent effort, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, brushing the dust off him, asked:

"Why are you not carrying the bricks one at a time like your friends Ammar?"

"I am doing it in anticipation of the reward from Allah", he replied. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon patted him back on the back and said, "Others have one reward, Ammar, whereas you have two!" (Ahmad, III, 91; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 256)

The report below attests to the fact that both men and women labored enthusiastically in the building of the *Masjid*:

"When his wife passed away, Abdullah ibn Awfa ﷺ urged people to 'Carry her coffin…with enthusiasm, too. For indeed, she and her slaves used to carry the stones

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the quintessential example of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, during the construction of the magnificent Sultan Ahmad Mosque, Sultan Ahmad I had worked like a laborer with a shovel and pickax in hand. After his death, her daughter Gevher Nesibe Hatun had a dream in which she saw him in a magnificent place in Paradise, and she curiously asked, 'With what deed did you attain to such a high rank, father?' 'I carried stones on my back during the construction of the mosque', he replied, 'and that is the reason I have been given this high rank'.

To think that when Sultan Ahmad I was carrying stones on his back, a beautiful display of Islamic morals, the Ottoman State was at her peak, ruling the vastest territories on record. Kings were bowing to her majesty and were ordained only by the hands of her grand viziers.

of the *Masjid* of the Prophet, built upon the foundations of piety, at night. And we men were carrying them in twos come day." (Haythami, II, 10)

A quadrangle, the Masjid'un-Nabi originally had a length and width of approximately a hundred *zira*,[296] and a height of five to seven *zira*, the first three at the base of which was stone and the ascending remainder of mud bricks.[297] Mud was additionally used in the mortar of the building.[298] As columns, logs of date trees were rowed together on the *qibla* side of the Masjid, and leaves and branches of the same trees were used for its roof and pillars.[299] It had a *mihrab* faced towards the *Masjid'ul-Aqsa* at Jerusalem and three doors. Once the *qibla* was relocated towards Kaabah, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had the first door closed, in place of which he had another one opened on the Damascus side wall.[300]

Two additional rooms were built adjacent to the Masjid for the lodging of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his family;[301] the number of which progressively increased.

Hasan Basri, who during his childhood breathed the air of the house of the Noble Messenger ﷺ due to her mother serving as helper to the honorable Umm Salama, recounts how a person could then easily touch the roof of these rooms,[302] from which one could guess they were not so high. The doors of the rooms consisted of felts made of black fleece.[303]

Said ibn Musayyab, one of the great imams of the *Tabiun* generation, expresses his grief over the demolishing of these rooms during the reign of the Umayyad dynasty and their incorporation to the Masjid:

"By Allah, how I would have wished these rooms to be left as they were, so that today's generation and those to come and visit could see exactly how much the Messenger of Allah was content with in life and thereby turn away from hoarding up and boasting over wealth!" (Ibn Sad, I, 499-500)

As the Mosque was covered with date branches and leaves, when it rained, its surface of soil would give way to mud. Once during Ramadan, while the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was in *itiqaf*, the splattering rain had inundated the *Masjid* and traces of mud could be seen on the Prophet's ﷺ face as he lead the *fajr* salat.[304]

296. A *zira* is 75 cm's.
297. Ibn Saad, I, 239.
298. Diyarbakri, I, 344.
299. Bukhari, Salat, 62.
300. Diyarbakri, I, 346.
301. Ibn Saad, I, 240.
302. Ibn Saad, VII, 161; Suhayli, I, 248.
303. Ibn Saad, I, 499.
304. Bukhari, Itiqaf, 1.

On another occasion, it had again rained, dampening the surface. A man then carried some sand inside his clothes and laid it on the surface to dry it out. Impressed, after completing the salat, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed his satisfaction by remarking:

"How wonderful a measure!" (Abu Dawud, Salat, 15/458)

Once, on the way back from Damascus, Tamim'ud-Dari ﷺ brought with him a considerable amount of lamps, with oil and strings to go with them. It was Friday when he made his way inside the *Masjid*. He asked his servant Abu'l-Barrad to put some oil and water inside the lamps, hang them up inside the *Masjid* and light them up after sunset. Seeing the *Masjid* glowing with lamps upon entering, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ inquired whose idea this was.

"It was Tamim's, Messenger of Allah", was the response. Visibly happy, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then said to Tamim:

"You have lit up Islam and adorned her *Masjid*, so may Allah light you up in Here and the Hereafter!" (Samhudi, II, 596-597; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, II, 18)

In the words of the Blessed Messenger ﷺ, the *Masjid'un-Nabawi* is one of the three mosques worthy of journeying to with the purposes of visiting and worshipping. (Bukhari, Fadl'us-Salat, 1; Muslim, Hajj, 505-510) He in fact says in a *hadith*:

"The area between my house and my *minbar* (pulpit) is a garden from among the gardens of Paradise. My *minbar* stands above my Pool (of Kawthar)." (Bukhari, Fadl'us-Salat, 5; Fadail'ul-Medina 11; Muslim, Hajj, 502)

On the words of the Prophet ﷺ, a salat offered at his Mosque reaps a reward a thousand times greater than that offered anywhere else, apart from Kaabah, the Sacred House. (Bukhari, Fadl'us-Salat, 1; Muslim, Hajj, 505-510)

According to the report of Anas ﷺ, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to address the congregation inside the *Masjid* resting against a date trunk. The need for a *minbar* was glaring, so it was put up, on which the Noble Prophet ﷺ was to give his *khutbah* thereafter. But the moment the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ascended the *minbar* for the first time, as if to give vent to the agony of being abandoned, a groan resembling that of a camel was heard from the trunk. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then immediately came down from the *minbar* and patted the trunk awhile. Only after that did the trunk stop groaning and find peace. (Bukhari, Juma, 26; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 6/3627)

"It cried because of falling distant to the *dhikr* of Allah that was previously carried out close to it", the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said. (Bukhari, Manaqib, 25; Ahmad, III, 300)

Reports vary as to where the trunk was placed after the incident. One account states it was buried in a ditch dug up underneath the *minbar*, while according to

another, it was placed on the ceiling. Wherever it may have been placed, one thing is known. During the rebuilding of the Masjid in the time of Caliph Othman ﷺ, the trunk was taken by Ubayy ibn Kaab ﷺ, who kept it in his house until it was entirely consumed by bugs.[305]

In his *Mathnawi*, the great Mawlana Rumi makes the illustrious date trunk talk in a spiritual language:

"The Prophet ﷺ descended from the minbar and patting the date trunk with his blessed hands, asked, with the profoundest of insights:

'What is that you want, date trunk? Why do you weep? What is wrong?" The date trunk then began speaking in its own language, and shedding warm tears, said:

'Your longing, Messenger of Allah, has burnt me to crisp…it has filled me with an incommunicable grief and yearning. The fortunate and happy pole against which you used to rest at sermon time was I. But now you have left me and ascended a *minbar*. The *minbar* is now your rest. But Messenger of Allah! Please acknowledge my pain, for which being on Earth could ever stand your separation?'

In response to the deep plea of love pronounced by the date trunk, the Prophet ﷺ said, soothingly:

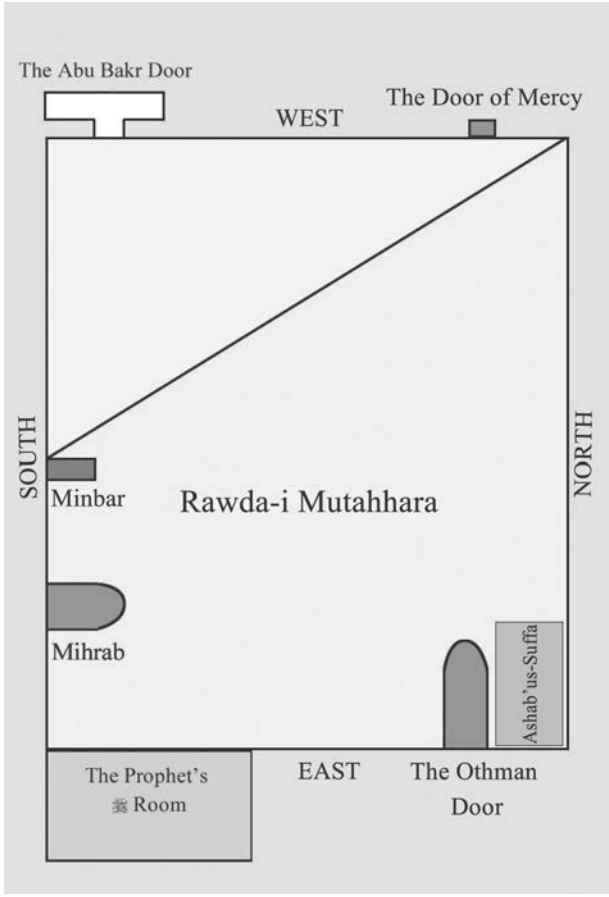
'Since you wail from the pain of separation, date trunk, wish from me whatever you please! Should I request Allah to turn you into a lusciously green and vibrant tree, providing fruits for entire mankind, East and West? Or should I ask Him to make you into a cypress sapling of Paradise where you shall remain forever young and ripe, like the most beautiful of bodies?'

Receiving these gratifying compliments, the trunk then made the following request of the Prophet ﷺ, manifesting its scorching love deep inside:

"I want neither, Messenger of Allah. My only wish is to annihilate in your existence…therefore I plea you to bury and dispose of me and save me from my mortal body. For no matter how luscious and beautiful a tree may be, it takes its nutrition from the sun and water. But my life has received its nourishment from your own light. It has tasted the zest of providing a rest for you, warming in your warmth and scorching in your love. I may no longer be separated from this sweet pleasure. I want that which is eternal. Bury and dispose of me in such a way that I will be able to revive with your one and only light and become eternal.'

That date trunk was buried so it could be resurrected on the Day of Judgment like a human being."

305. Ibn Saad, I, 251-252.



Immediately after gracing Medina, one of the first initiatives the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took towards instituting a tight knit Islamic community was the building of the *Masjid*. Casting off differences of wealth and status and gathering at the house of Allah, glory unto Him, five times a day, no doubt plays an enormous role in establishing brotherhood among Believers. It is for no other reason that Muslim towns have generally been founded around mosques, which have acted as hubs for the neighborhoods around it, in a way accommodating an outward expansion of settlement.

Together with being a precinct of worship, the *Masjid*, during the Age of Bliss, was a school, an assembly for deciding matters at hand, a center for discussing administrative and military issues, a hospital and a place of leisure. The *Masjid* also provided boarding for unmarried or homeless Companions who frequented the lessons, talks and *dhikr* assemblies held there, effectively making it, at the same time, a guesthouse.

Encouraging Communal Salat

Social training comprises one of the most vital fundamentals of Islam. The opening phase of the social training a Muslim receives is through offering communal salat, in *jamaah*, the sturdiest pillar of deed that keeps Muslim society at its feet. Wherever it may be, communal salat serves to actualize the social spirit of Islam. Wanting to institute unity and solidarity among its members, Islam has thus desired the offering of salat, a trademark characteristic of a Muslim, in *jamaah*,

and has considered attending mosques a testimony of being a Believer. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ states:

"When you see a person make a habit of attending mosques then bear witness to his *iman* inside, for Allah declares:

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللهِ

'The mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day…' (at-Tawba, 18)" (Ibn Majah, Masajid, 19)

The importance of maintaining mosques physically is equaled by maintaining them spiritually through attending communal salat, which is a crucial duty of servanthood. The words below, narrated through Abu Hurayra ﷺ, declare:

"Truly strange on Earth are four things: The Quran in the memory of a tyrant, a mosque inside which salat is not offered despite being in a Muslim land, a Quran unread despite hanging on a wall inside a house and a righteous living amid the corrupted." (Daylami, III, 108/4301)

Allah, glory unto Him, places so enormous an importance on offering salat in *jamaah* that He commands it even in battle and teaches the exact manner of doing it in the Quran.

Abu Hurayra ﷺ explains:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had once taken a break in his journey somewhere between Dajnan and Usfan. The idolaters conspired to:

'…prepare and attack the Believers right at *asr* salat time, for it is a salat dearer to them than their children and parents!' It was then that Jibril –upon him peace- came to the Messenger of Allah with the 102nd *ayah* of *surah* Nisa which explains the manner in which salat is to be offered during battle." (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 4/21)

No matter how unfavorable the conditions may be, a Muslim therefore must adjourn salat and suspend its offering in *jamaah*.

Some *hadith* of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ strongly encouraging communal salat are:

"Salat offered in *jamaah* is twenty-seven times more rewarding than that offered alone." (Bukhari, Adhan, 30)

"Whoever attends the mosque day and night, for his every journey to and fro, Allah will prepare him a treat in Paradise." (Bukhari, Adhan, 37)

"Each time one takes a thorough *wudu* and sets out for salat, Allah will give a reward every time he raises his right foot to take a step, and erase a misdeed every time he steps his left foot down, whether the mosque be near or distant. If he makes it to the mosque and offers the salat in *jamaah*, his sins will be forgiven…and this is valid even if he arrives at the mosque only to see some part of the salat already completed, given he joins them and completes the remainder on his own immediately after. The same goes even if he finds the salat entirely completed and therefore is made to offer the salat on his own." (Abu Dawud, Salat, 50/563)

"A Believer who waits in a mosque for a salat to begin is considered to be in salat." (Ibn Majah, Masajid, 14)

Abu Hurayra ﷺ narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once asked, 'Should I inform you of the deeds through which Allah erases sins and increases ranks?'

'Please do, Messenger of Allah', replied we.

'Taking *wudu* despite all the trouble, increasing the steps to arrive at mosques and anticipating the next salat right after the other…Such are true *ribat*.[306]'" (Muslim, Taharat, 41)

Yazid ibn Amir ﷺ recounts another occasion:

"I once arrived next to the Messenger of Allah while he was offering salat. I sat and did not join the *jamaah*. When the Messenger of Allah turned towards us after completing the salat, he noticed me sitting on the side:

'Have you not become Muslim, Yazid?' he asked.

'Of course I have, Messenger of Allah' I responded.

'Then what is it that keeps you away from offering your salat in *jamaah*?' he then inquired.

'Supposing you must have already offered the salat', I said, 'I offered it at home.' Thereupon the Messenger of Allah advised:

'If you come to the mosque and find people offering salat, join them. It will count as a bonus if you have already offered it; and what you have already offered will count as the obligatory (*fard*).'" (Abu Dawud, Salat, 56/577)

Uncompromising in making any allowances for communal salat, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ wanted Muslims to regulate their situations and routines in accordance

306. *Ribat* carries meanings like bonding the ego to obedience, standing guard near the borders or struggling in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. A cause for great rewards, *ribat* has been emphatically praised in both the Quran and Sunnah.

with the five daily *adhans*. Exemplary of this attitude is the case of Abdullah ibn Ummi Maqtum ﷺ, who came to the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ and asked:

"I am a blind man, Messenger of Allah, as you know, and my house is far from the *Masjid*. I do have a guide but he fails to help me. Can I have permission to offer my salats at home?"

"Do you hear the adhan?" then inquired the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to which Ibn Maqtum replied positively.

"I cannot", then said the Noble Messenger, "think of any excuses for you to remain behind from the *jamaah*." (Abu Dawud, Salat, 46/552)

Concerning the attendance of distant mosques, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ has additionally stated:

"To reap the greatest rewards from salat are those who come from afar by walking…and he who waits to offer the salat behind the imam in *jamaah* receives a far greater reward than he who quickly offers it at home and returns to sleep." (Bukhari, Adhan, 31)

"The further the distance of one's house is from the mosque, the greater are his rewards on his way thereto." (Abu Dawud, Salat, 48/556)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ has issued various warnings to those who fail to attend communal salat. Explaining the following is Ubayy ibn Kaab ﷺ:

"On one occasion the Messenger of Allah ﷺ led us in *fajr* salat, before turning around and asking whether a certain person was present. It turned out he was not. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then asked whether another person was present. It turned out that he, too, was also absent. Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said:

'Such are the two salats that are the most burdensome for hypocrites. Had you known of the enormity of their rewards, you would have attended the *jamaah*, even if you had to crawl your way here. The first row is like that of the angels. Had you known of the virtue of lining up there, you would have competed with each other for a spot. A salat one offers with another is more propitious and has greater rewards than that he offers on his own. A salat one offers with two persons is likewise more propitious and superior to that offered with only one person. The more the amount of people there are, the more Allah is delighted.'" (Abu Dawud, Salat, 47/554)

The Prophet ﷺ has said, in another *hadith*:

"The salat of a mosque's neighbor is perfected only if he offers it at the mosque." (Ibn Abi Shayba, I, 303)

When asked about who was intended by the expression 'a mosque's neighbor', Ali ﷺ explained:

"Everyone, who hears the call of *adhan*." (Bayhaki, as-Sunanu'l-Kubra, III, 57)

The below words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in turn contain ominous threats for those who abandon communal salat:

"If in a village or in a meadow there are three people who do not offer their salat in *jamaah*, shaytan will besiege and defeat them. Therefore continue attending *jamaah*, for a sheep that abandons the flock is carried away by the wolf." (Abu Dawud, Salat, 46/547)

"Either people stop abandoning *jamaah*, or Allah will seal their hearts and render them among the heedless." (Ibn Majah, Masajid, 17)

The First *Adhan*

Only the words '*to salat, to salat*' were called out in the beginning to inform Believers of the time of worship. The blessing of *adhan* was to come awhile after.

In the meantime, the Noble Messenger ﷺ was consulting his Companions about the ideal way of calling Believers to salat. "Let's put up a flag at the time of salat", some said, "…and Believers could notify each other as soon they see it." But the Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not fancy the idea; neither was he keen on the proposal of blowing a horn, which he dismissed for being "an instrument of the Jews." Again, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, was not fond of the idea of ringing bells, which was also brought up in the discussion, as it was "a typical Christian practice." Abdullah ibn Zayd ﷺ[307], a Companion present throughout the discussion and able to empathize with the feelings of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, made his way back home. There, as he lay in a state between slumbering and wakefulness, he had a vision of the *adhan*. He immediately returned next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, telling him how he had been "taught the adhan as he was lying down."

After finding out that Omar ﷺ had also seen the same dream, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ commanded Bilal ﷺ to repeat aloud the words Abdullah ibn Zayd ﷺ had

307. Abdullah ibn Zayd ibn Asim al-Ansari ﷺ earned the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ praises for closely defending him during the Battle of Uhud. Abdullah was not alone in his heroism during the battle; his entire family showed immense courage throughout, for which the Noble Messenger ﷺ prayed they be neighbors with him in Paradise. Time and again, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would visit the house of Abdullah ibn Zayd, where he performed many a salat. Ibn Zayd al-Ansari ﷺ was among the Companions imbued with the greatest affection for the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Shaken upon receiving the news of the Prophet's ﷺpassing away, Abdullah made a heartfelt plea, praying the Almighty to '…take away my sight so I do not get to see anyone after Muhammad ﷺ!' His plea was accepted there and then, and Abdullah ﷺ lived the rest of his years a blind man. (Qurtubi, V, 271) He was later martyred at Harra with his two sons.

heard. The echoes of *adhan* were thus heard for the very first time. (Abu Dawud, Salat, 27/498)

Adhan thus became a Sunnah, strong enough to be on level par with compulsoriness (*wajib*), for it is attested to by an affirmative dream, the practice of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and Divine Revelation, which cites:

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ

"And when you call to prayer..." (al-Maida, 58)

Although it was Abdullah ibn Zayd ﷺ who proved to be the medium in sanctioning the *adhan*, it must be borne in mind that it was always the Blessed Prophet ﷺ who was subject to Divine Revelation and heavenly inspiration. Only after his approval was the *adhan* established as the means of calling Believers to mosques. Once Bilal Habashi ﷺ called the first *adhan*, the Divine invitation reached every corner of Medina and the Believers paced exuberantly towards the *Masjid* underneath skies shaking with the echoes of the *adhan*.

Despite the proposal of numerous means of inviting Believers to the mosque, the Light of Being ﷺ disapproved of all of them apart from the *adhan*, which he instated with great enthusiasm. The *adhan* is undoubtedly a precise summary of Islam's conception of Allah, glory unto Him and the Prophet ﷺ, as well as its notion of worshipping and life in general, to all of which it then helps bond the Believer. It could be said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ hence decided on the best option possible in inviting people to salat.

Confirmed by both the Quran and Sunnah, the *adhan* has continued for over the past 1400 odd years to give Muslims an invitation from the heavens. It is a universal and international call for salat, for which reason it cannot be recited in any other form than its original. Virtually the heavenly chant of the skies, it summons those who hear it to compliance.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ has said:

"When you hear the *adhan*, repeat it with the *muaddhin*, word for word. Then send me a greeting, for the mercy Allah shows for it is ten times the amount of one's greeting. Then pray that I get to receive the *wasila*, a rank in Paradise that will be granted to just one servant of Allah. I anticipate that I shall be that one. I will consider myself obliged to intercede on behalf of each person who asks from Allah the *wasila* on my behalf." (Muslim, Salat; Abu Dawud, Salat, 26/523)

In another *hadith*, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ explicitly assures Paradise for those who repeat the words of the *muaddhin* upon hearing the *adhan*.[308] And regarding the prayer to be made after, he has said:

"I will most definitely intercede on behalf of a person who repeats the following after hearing the adhan: O the Lord of this perfect invitation and the offered salat! Grant Muhammad ﷺ *wasila* and *fadila* and resurrect him upon the rank of *Mahmud* which you have promised!" (Bukhari, Adhan, 8; Abu Dawud, Salat, 37/529)

The virtues of *adhan* have been the subject of many *ahadith*, some of which are below:

"Two prayers are never or very seldom refused: The first is the prayer made following the *adhan*, and the second is the prayer made during battle, just when both sides launch into each other." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 39/2540)

"Had people known of the rewards awaiting those who call out the *adhan* and those standing in the first row during salat, and they had no other way to decide than to draw lots, they certainly would have." (Bukhari, Adhan, 9, 32; Muslim, Salat, 129)

"Whenever the *adhan* is called for salat, Shaytan flees, noisily breaking wind, and escapes to a place where he cannot hear the *adhan*. Once the *adhan* comes to an end, he returns; and runs off once again when the *qamah* starts. He then returns once more, creeping into passage that runs to the heart of a person, whispering 'think this, remember that'; things which were previously no way near one's thoughts, to the extent that one taken in by these whispers can no longer remember which stage of the salat he is in." (Bukhari, Adhan, 4; Muslim, Salat, 19)

The *Suffa*: The School of Knowledge and Wisdom

One part of the Masjid was reserved for a *Suffa*[309], an arbour covered with date leaves lodging Muslims who were underprivileged or who had no families, known the people of the *Suffa*.[310] Their numbers would vary depending on the death, the marriage or the departure of its members for reasons like relocation or going to battle; though at one stage it has been reported to have reached seventy. There are some sources which make mention of over a hundred Companions reportedly of the *Suffa*. Personally covering their living expenses was the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who would also encourage well-to-do Companions to lend out their assistance.

Abu Hurayra ؓ, himself a member of the *Suffa*, recounts:

308. Muslim, Salat, 12.
309. *Suffa* is a term used to refer to the part of old homes which was raised, like couches, for seating. *Sofa*, as used in Turkish, is a derivative of the term.
310. Ibn Saad, I, 255.

"The folk of the *Suffa* were guests of Islam. Neither did they have a family to take refuge in, nor anyone of close kin. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to forward every donation that came his way to them, never sparing any for himself. If what came was a present, he would then only take a portion for himself, and again forward the rest to the *Suffa*, sharing with them even the presents given to him." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 17)

Abu Hurayra ﷺ again describes:

"I myself saw seventy people of the *Suffa*. None of them had clothes to cover their entire bodies. They either had an *izar* to cover themselves from waist down, or a *rida* from waist up; so they would tie their clothes around their necks. Some of these used to reach half way between their thighs, while some to the soles on their feet, though still, to prevent their privates from being exposed, they used to hold their clothes in place." (Bukhari, Salat, 58)

The following words are from Fadala ibn Ubayd ﷺ:

"While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would lead the salat, some would pass out behind him would from excruciating hunger. These were none other than the people of the *Suffa*. Arabs of the desert who saw them used to think they were insane. After completing the salat, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would go next to those who had passed out from hunger, and console them with the words, 'If you knew the rewards prepared for you next to Allah, you would desire even greater poverty and neediness.'" (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 39/2368)

Abdurrahman ibn Abi Bakr ﷺ narrates the following incident:

"The people of the *Suffa* were extremely poor. I remember the Prophet ﷺ one day say, 'Whoever has food for two, take a person from the *Suffa* as the third, and whoever has food for four, take a fifth, even a sixth from the *Suffa*.'

Abu Bakr, my father, brought three from among them to our house. And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took ten of them. I assure you by Allah that the food increased with every bite we took. The guests eventually ate to their hearts content, yet the food was standing there even more than it was before. My father stared awhile at the food and then asked his wife what was going on, who could do so little as to remark, 'I swear by the light of my eye that the food is three times more than it was before.'" (Bukhari, Mawaqit, 41; Manaqib, 25; Adab, 87-88; Muslim, Ashriba, 176-177)

This scene is an actual instance of the abundance that comes with being sincere and generous.

The members of the *Suffa* would work whenever the opportunity presented itself, and give themselves to worship and acquiring knowledge at all times else. Indeed, those with enough strength and vigor would do whatever they could, from

carrying buckets of water or wood on their backs from the surrounding hilltops, purchasing food for their friends with the money they earned.[311] Cautious about preserving their dignity, they would refrain from all behavior that could cast a shadow on their character. They hence abstained from from asking things of others.

The people of the *Suffa* were the closest to the source of the Religion, the most to breathe the atmosphere of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. They were therefore educated quicker than others. Headed by the Noble Prophet ﷺ, their teachers also comprised of prominent Companions such as Ubayy ibn Kaab, Abdullah ibn Masud, Muadh ibn Jabal and Ubada ibn Samit ﷺ.

The Companions of the *Suffa* were subjected to an advanced and an accelerated training, as testified by the fact that all of the *mukthirun*, Companions with the most number of *hadith* narrations, hailed from the *Suffa*. The most renowned of them Abu Hurayra ﷺ is known to have commented:

"People are amazed that 'Abu Hurayra narrates a lot of *ahadith*'. But while our brothers of the *Muhajirun* were occupied with trading in the bazaar and those of the *Ansar* were busy with ploughing their lands, Abu Hurayra was by the side of the Messenger of Allah, in return for nothing worldly, witnessing many things they were not able to witness and learning what they could not." (Bukhari, Ilm, 42)

Delegates temporarily visiting Medina for the purpose of learning Islam were simultaneously meeting with the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ and learning from the Companions of the *Suffa* what they knew not. Whenever the need of sending a teacher to tribes that had just recently entered Islam arose, they were almost always selected from among the ranks of the *Suffa*.

Virtue wise, the Companions of the *Suffa* are ranked only behind *Khulafa'ur-Rashidin*, or the Pious Caliphs, *Asharat'ul-Mubashshara*, the ten Companions promised with Paradise while still alive, and the *Ashab'ul-Badr*, the Companions who took arms at the Battle of Badr. The Almighty declares:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ
إِلْحَافًا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

"Alms are for the poor who are confined in the way of Allah - they cannot go about in the land; the ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of their abstaining from begging; you can recognise them by the mark in their faces; they do

311. Bukhari, Maghazi 28, Jihad 9; Ibn Saad, III, 514.

not beg from men importunately; and whatever good thing you spend, surely Allah knows it." (al-Baqara, 273)

Habbab ﷺ describes:

"Aqra ibn Habis and Uyayna ibn Hisn, idolaters notorious for their conceit, once came next to the Messenger of Allah, finding him seated among poor and lonesome Muslims like Bilal, Suhayb, Ammar and myself. Looking down on us, they said to the Messenger of Allah, contemptuously, 'We want you to reserve a separate place for us, so that the other Arabs are made aware of our superiority over them. You very well know that many delegates from tribes all around Arabia come and visit us. We would feel embarrassed if they saw us in the same environment as these slaves. So send them away when we come…but you can, if you want, sit with them when we are not around!'

'Very well', said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

'We cannot take that as an answer', they retorted. 'Put that pledge for us in written form.' So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent for Ali ﷺ and a leaf to record the agreement. In the meantime, we were still sitting in a corner. It was then that Jibril ﷺ arrived with the Revelation:

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ
وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

"And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His favor; neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours, so that you should drive them away and thus be of the unjust." (al-Anam, 52)

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لِّيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَنَّ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ

"And thus do We try some of them by others so that they say: Are these they upon whom Allah has conferred benefit from among us? Does not Allah best know the grateful?" (al-Anam, 53)

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

"And when those who believe in Our communications come to you, say: Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself…" (al-Anam, 54)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ thereupon immediately put the leaf he had to record the agreement aside and called us next to him. When we went to him, we found him saying, 'Peace be on you; your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself…'

We were sitting so close to him that our knees were resting against his. After the Revelation, we continued sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ like old and he would leave whenever he wished. But after the Revelation:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

"And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord, morning and evening, desiring His goodwill, and let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life…" (al-Kahf, 28), he abandoned doing that, too. After that time we began to act considerately as well. After sitting with the Messenger of Allah for a considerable amount of time, we would show discretion by acting first and leaving, so that he could feel at ease as he parted ways with us." (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 7; Tabari, Tafsir, VII, 262-263)

Once the above Revelation came, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, immediately, got up and went searching for those poor Believers, soon finding them at the back part of the *Masjid*, worshipping. Setting his eyes on them, he then said, "Praise be to Allah who has commanded me to withhold myself with these people from my *ummah*! Now, my life and death shall be your side!" (Wahidi, p. 306)

Recounting the following is Abu Said ﷺ:

"I was seated with a group of poor men from among the *Muhajirun*. Some of them, without adequate clothing to even cover their bodies, were ducking under the shadows of others for cover. Someone was reciting us some Quran. Suddenly, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appeared and waited awhile, standing. Upon his arrival, the person reciting the Quran stopped his recital. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ greeted us and asked:

'What are you doing?'

'He is our teacher,' we said. 'He reads us the Quran and we lend ear to the Book of Allah.'

'Thanks be to Allah who has created, among my *ummah*, those I have been command to bear patient with,'[312] then said the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

Then with supreme modesty, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat amongst us. Signaling with his finger, he said:

'Form a circle like this…'

We thereupon formed a circle around the Messenger ﷺ, facing him. That was when he gave us the following good news:

'Glad tidings to you, the poor folk of *Muhajirun*…I give you the good news of a full light in the Hereafter. You will enter Paradise half a day before the rich…a half a day that equals the sum of five hundred years on Earth!'" (Abu Dawud, Ilm, 13/3666)

The Blessed Prophet's ﷺ Marriage to the Honorable Aisha

The marriage between the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the honorable Aisha ﵂ was actually contracted in Mecca prior to the Hegira, actualized, however, afterward in Medina.

Aisha ﵂ recounts the event as follows:

"When the Messenger of Allah immigrated to Medina, he left her daughters and me behind in Mecca. Later on, he sent Zayd ibn Haritha and Abu Rafi to Mecca, giving them two camels and 500 dirhams to cover their expenses of travel. Likewise, my father Abu Bakr sent Abdullah ibn Urayqit with them, with two or three additional camels, with the message telling my brother Abdullah to arrange for my mother Umm Ruman, my sister Asma and me to be sent on camelback to Medina. Abu Rafi sorted the camels for Fatima, Umm Kulthum and Sawda bint Zama, while Zayd saw to arranging mounts for Umm Ayman and her son Usama. So we all set out.[313] When we reached Bayz near Mina, our camel ran away, with my mother and I astride inside its *hawdaj*.[314] My mother was terrified; 'pity on my daughter', I was hearing her say. But a short time later, Allah had our camel calmed, and we rejoined the rest.

312. The words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ are an allusion to the 28th *ayah* of al-Kahf. There the Almighty commands the Prophet ﷺ to remain patient alongside the underprivileged few, who were the first to enter Islam, in the face of the possible hardships they may encounter and be sensitive in his treatment of them.
313. Zaynab ﵂ had to remain in Mecca for a little while longer, due to her husband Abu'l-As ibn Rabi' declining to give permission.
314. A *hawdaj* is a small, screened saddle used for sheltering females on camelback.

We eventually made it to Medina safe and sound. Even though I had already been wed with the Messenger of Allah in Mecca, I continued to stay with my family. At that stage, the *Masjid* and the surrounding chambers had been built and the Messenger of Allah moved into his own room, as did his family. After awhile, my father asked the Messenger of Allah what was keeping him from actualizing the marriage.

"The *mahr*", he replied.

Subsequently, my father lent a helping hand by sending him twelve-and-a-half *uqiyya*[315], with which in the month of Shawwal the Messenger of Allah actualized our marriage.[316] Neither a camel nor a sheep was slaughtered for the wedding; only Saad ibn Ubadah ﷺ[317] sent food inside a large container.[318]

The Situation in Medina

The Medinan Era, when Islam and Muslims reigned sovereign, was a lively and vigorous period, replete with propitious activity, in which the universal principles of Islam gained an unshaKaable foothold; and the blood shed throughout a number of battles only served to reinforce that further.

At first, the situation in Medina was not entirely uncomplicated, despite the town having welcomed the incoming immigrants with an open heart. There were some ensuing dangers, aggravated primarily by the hypocrites and Jews, who owing to their dissident attitudes towards the rise of Islam, relentlessly sought to sow the seeds of enmity.

The hallmark of the hypocrites was their persistence with their idolater beliefs of old, despite appearing to have accepted Islam on the surface. Allah, glory unto

315. An *uqiyya* is formerly used currency of silver coins. Also utilized as a unit of weight, an uqiyya a - proximately corresponds to 128 grams.

316. Ibn Saad, VIII, 58, 62-63.

317. Saad ibn Ubadah ﷺ became a Muslim in the Second Aqabah Pledge. He was among the twelve representatives elected there. Matching his wealth with an amazing generosity, he used to send meals to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ everyday during his seven month stay at the house of Khalid ibn Zayd. Not a day would pass without Ibn Ubadah holding a feast in his castle like house, where all were welcome. He fed the *Suffa* everyday. He carried the flag of Khazraj throughout many battles. During the Battle of Dhu Qarad, he donated ten camel loads of dates to the army, in satisfaction of which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ prayed, 'Allah, have mercy on Saad and his family!' He fed the entire Muslim army during the campaign of Banu Qurayza. Both his life and wealth were virtually mediums for struggling in the way of Allah until the day he passed away. As his house was situated in outer Medina and therefore was distant to the *Masjid*, Saad had a small mosque built there. Following the election of Abu Bakr ﷺ as Caliph, Saad ibn Ubadah ﷺ relocated to Hawran, near Damascus, where he subsequently passed away in 635. He was buried in the small town of Ghuta.

318. Ahmad, VI, 211.

Him, who would ultimately see his Light through, in the meantime, launched a menacing threat against them:

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُوا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

"And from among those who are round about you of the dwellers of the desert there are hypocrites, and from among the people of Medina (also); they are stubborn in hypocrisy; you do not know them; We know them; We will chastise them twice then shall they be turned back to a grievous chastisement." (at-Tawba, 101)

So skilful were the hypocrites in their deceit that not even could the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sense their ways, gaining insight only through a related Divine Revelation, and that, when it came. The hypocrites were exceptionally wary of engaging in behavior that could incure the least disapproval and were hence acting as covertly as one could.

The Meccan idolaters, who had forced the Muslims to immigrate, were meanwhile keeping busy with fanning the flames of malice sparked by the hypocrites of Medina. Corresponding with the hypocrites on a regular basis, terrified by the thought that Islam might flourish, the Meccans were inciting their comrades-in-arms to raise their swords against the Muslims and wipe them of the face of Medina. These provocations were echoing a threatening tone; should the Medinans shy away from dealing with Muslims, then the Meccan idolaters were assuring them that they would come, backed by the entire tribes of the peninsula, and do the job themselves, but with one difference of detail that they would put to the sword indiscriminately the entire population of Medina, Muslim and others alike. To show they were equal to the task, the idolaters even sent a mob to Medina, which looted their stock grazing in the outskirts of the town.

The situation had become delicate and danger was visible on the horizon. The Believers began to guard the streets at night, taking every preventative measure against a possible raid. On the end of sleepless nights was even the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Small forces were being sent outside of Medina to keep an eye out over the town and not to get blind sighted in case of an attack.

On the other hand were the Jewish tribes, the archenemies of Believers, constantly on the prowl for the right moment to strike. Owing to their religious heritage, they had gotten themselves in the fiercest tug of war with the Muslims and were causing much headache. The first *surah* to be revealed in Medina, al-Baqara, had thus put great emphasis in inviting the Jews to Islam. Following a general invitation handed to out to entire humankind, the Chapter makes elaborate mention

of the 'Children of Israel' between its 40th and 162nd *ayah*, heightening its reference, in particular, in the 123rd, which in effect makes nearly more than half the *surah* reserved to them. The Divine expressions alternate from addressing the Jews directly to providing a description of them in the third person; and by virtue of refuting their claims and reminding them of the blessings they had been bestowed with, they seek to rekindle the light of *iman* in the hearts of Jews.[319]

The Jewish poet Kaab ibn Ashraf had made a habit of satirizing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, spurring Meccans against him, under the influence of which the poets of Quraysh would follow suit. Hassan ibn Thabit ﷺ, the greatest poet of the *Ansar*, thereupon asked the Noble Prophet's ﷺ permission to retaliate. His permission was granted.[320]

Poetry, then, had the force of what the media has today. The Noble Messenger ﷺ had placed a pulpit inside the *Masjid* especially for Hassan ibn Thabit, who would voice his poetic satires in defense of the malignant words leveled at the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

"As long as he defends the Messenger of Allah", the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would say, "the Holy Spirit shall be with Hassan." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 87/5015)

At the face of Jewish and idolater persistence in meting out torment to both the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Believers, the Almighty was urging His Beloved with patience and forgiveness. A day before the Battle of Badr, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, astride a donkey with Usama ibn Zayd behind him, went to pay the ill Saad bin Ubada a visit. On the way, he came upon a group, sitting around, which also included Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul, who still had not professed his 'outward' acceptance of Islam; he was openly proclaiming his non-belief. Also seated alongside him were some Believers, including Abdullah ibn Rawaha, as well as Jews and idolaters. The donkey, on which the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ was astride with Ibn Zayd, whirled up some dust as it passed, reaching the seated group. Covering his nose with the tip of his shirt, Abdullah ibn Ubayy retorted:

"Don't raise dust on us!"

Dismounting his ride, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then greeted the crowd and reciting some Quran invited them to believe in Allah, glory unto Him.

319. See, Draz, *an-Nabau'l-Azîm,* p. 178.
320. Bukhari, Manâqıb, 16; Muslim, Fadailu's-Sahaba, 156-157.

"Why are you telling us these things?" Abdullah bin Ubayy retorted once again. "If the things you say are true, then leave us alone…go home and tell them to those who come to listen to you!"

"Much the contrary", intervened Abdullah ibn Rawaha. "Visit our assemblies, Messenger of Allah, for we take much delight from hearing your words!"

This was followed by a heated, all-in dispute between the Muslims, idolaters and even Jews. They were on the brink of going at each others throats but the Blessed Prophet ﷺ managed to calm everybody down. Once things settled back to normal, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ mounted his ride and continued on his way, eventually arriving next to Saad ibn Ubada, telling him of the ordeal.

"Forgive them, Messenger of Allah; overlook their rudeness", Saad ibn Ubada consoled. "I assure you by the One who has sent you with the Book that right before you arrived as the Messenger of Allah, these people were getting ready to declare Ibn Ubayy leader and crown him as they crown kings. But when Allah sent you to us with the True Religion, his dreams of becoming a king were shattered and that left him in distress…it was like he could not even breathe anymore. His grudge is probably from that."

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thus forgave Abdullah ibn Ubayy over his antics. The below *ayah* was revealed in relation:

لَتُبْلَوُنَّ فِى أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ.

"Assuredly ye will be tried in your property and in your persons, and ye will hear much wrong from those who were given the Scripture before you, and from the idolaters. But if ye persevere and ward off (evil), then that is of the steadfast heart of things." (Al Imran, 186) Prior to the revealing of the *ayah* that have permission to take up arms, both the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Companions would forgive, as they had been commanded, the offensive and malignant behavior that came from the way of idolaters and Jews.[321]

Permission for Battle: "Fight those who fight you!"

The Noble Messenger ﷺ had not been given permission at first to take up arms against the idolaters, responsible only with inviting them to believe in the unity of Allah, glory unto Him, and in turn endure and turn a blind eye to the possible retaliations of their ignorant, in the form of torture and malignant behavior. Heartened,

321. Bukhari, Tafsîr, 3/15.

the idolaters of Quraysh were not letting the least opportunity go to exact torment on the followers of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in hope of turning them back to their pagan beliefs of old. And through persistently meting out the most ruthless forms of torture, they did succeed with some, while others were forced to leave their hometown for Abyssinia and then Medina, just for the sake of preserving their faith.

Events were taking such sharp turns for the worst that it had become almost impossible to maintain peace through the policy of 'endurance and patience', observed by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ until then. Even the adoption of self-defense could not even stem the tides of agony, forcing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to seek refuge in the Almighty, and anticipate a relieving Revelation.

Ultimately, as the idolaters were at an all-time low in their adamancy of denying all the blessings bestowed on them by the Almighty and of rejecting of the Noble Messenger ﷺ ; and at a time, when they were a cause of anxiety for Muslims even after their immigration, the *ayat* giving Muslims permission to fight back were revealed, stressing the need of self-defense which had by now become a matter of immediate urgency:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللهَ عَلَى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنصُرَنَّ اللهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

"Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them. Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty." (al-Hajj, 39-40)

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبِّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

"And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits." (al-Baqara, 190)

And as for the legitimate reasons and purposes for fighting, the Almighty proclaims:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلّٰهِ

"And fight with them until there is no more persecution and religion should be only for Allah…" (al-Anfal, 39)

The permission to fight is a result of the hostile attitude adopted against Islam and Muslims. *Jihad* has thus been decreed obligatory in order to safeguard and defend, against assaults, the *daruuraat'ul-khamsa*, or five imperatives, values which are vital for the survival of the existence of society. These are the protection of property, human life and progeny, reason and religion. The Divine Command carries the purpose of punishing those liable for the crime of swaying others away from the Truth and getting rid of all hindrances that stand in the way of its communication.

That Muhammad Mustafa, the pinnacle of all prophets ﷺ, sent as a mercy to entire humankind, had to engage in great and demanding battles despite nurturing an unfathomable compassion enough to take entire humankind under its shade, was necessitated by the need of establishing social peace and stability and consolidating the struggle for *tawhid*. The *hadith*, "I am a prophet of mercy and warfare", (Ahmad, IV, 396) should therefore be understood along these lines.

Accompanying the *ayah* that gave permission to fight back were others encouraging the Prophet ﷺ and the Believers to act in accordance with the Divine sanction:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللّٰهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ

"O Prophet! Allah is sufficient for you and for such of the believers who follow you. O Prophet! Urge the believers to war." (al-Anfal, 64-65)

أَلَا تُقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَّكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوا بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدَؤُوكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ فَاللّٰهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ وَيُذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ.

"What! Will you not fight those who broke their oaths and aimed at the expulsion of the Messenger, and they attacked you first; do you fear them? But Allah is most deserving that you should fear Him, if you are believers. Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them

and heal the hearts of a believing people. And remove the rage of their hearts; and Allah turns (mercifully) to whom He pleases, and Allah is Knowing, Wise." (at-Tawba, 13-15)

In addition, there came Revelations warning against falling behind from *jihad*:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.

"Warfare is ordained for you, though it is hateful unto you; but it may happen that you hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows; you know not." (al-Baqara, 216)

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَّسُولِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَّفْسِهِ.

"It is not for the townsfolk of Al-Madinah and for those around them of the wandering Arabs so stay behind the messenger of Allah and prefer their lives to his life." (at-Tawba, 120)

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللّٰهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ.

"Say: If your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your tribe, and the wealth you have acquired, and merchandise for which you fear that there will no sale, and dwellings you desire are dearer to you than Allah and His messenger and striving in His way: then wait till Allah brings His command to pass. Allah guides not the wrongdoing folk." (at-Tawba, 24)

Compliant with these Divine commands, following the lead of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Believers began a serious preparation to combat the idolaters.

Jihad in the way of Allah

Jihad, taken in the general sense, is for a person to engage in a struggle to refine and cleanse his ego, to fulfill the commands of the Almighty with utmost sincerity, to refrain from the impermissible,[322] to enjoin his fellow Muslims with the good and hope for their best, to explain the principles of Islam to nonbelievers and provide a medium for their guidance[323] and to utilize all means, be it one's life, wealth or speech, in protecting the religion and all that which is sacred and also in eliminating all barriers that prevent the communication of Truth, through a struggle of all kinds, certainly including, though not only, warfare.[324]

The term *jihad* therefore extends to and comprises all individual and social struggles and actions that are aimed towards purifying each 'self', and instituting an Islamic way of life, only for the sake of Allah, glory unto Him, and in the way of glorifying His religion. One would be far from exaggerating in saying that the twenty-three year period of prophethood was an exclusive commitment to this purpose.

The Almighty has rendered one's life and wealth means for tribulation, cautioning on many an occasion to use them instead as means for struggling in His Way, as elaborated in the *ayah* below:

لَكِنِ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَأُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَاتُ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

"But the messenger and those who believe with him strive with their wealth and their lives. Such are they for whom are the good things. Such are they who are the successful." (at-Tawba, 88)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ
أَلِيمٍ. تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ
وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ.

"O you who believe! Shall I show you a commerce that will save you from a painful doom? You should believe in Allah and His messenger, and should strive

322. Nasai, Hajj, 4.
323. Ahmad, III, 456.
324. For related Quranic *ayat* see, an-Nisa, 95; al-Anfal, 72; at-Tawba, 20, 41, 44, 81, 88; and for *ahadith*, Bukhari, Mazalim, 33; Muslim, Iman, 226; Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 28-29.

for the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is better for you, if you did but know." (as-Saff, 10-11)

The Companions one day asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to tell them of the most favorable person.

"A Believer", he said, "who uses his life and wealth for *jihad* in the way of Allah." (Bukhari, Jihad, Muslim, Imarat, 122)

Taking up *jihad* in the way of Allah, as commanded by both the Quran and Sunnah, does not only imply warfare; for taking up arms is the last resort, allowable only at times when there arises an immediate urgency to end oppression and instate justice. The ultimate *jihad* is that which aims at conquering hearts, which can be undertaken through various means, first and foremost through conveying the truth verbally or in writing.

Muslims had not yet acquired a serious power for warfare during the Meccan period, in spite of the revelation of numerous *ayat* on *jihad*. To comply with the Divine command at the face of the terror of the people of ignorance, Muslims were then simply embodying the character of a true Believer, in the name of advancing Islam and all notions signified by it, including truth and justice. Their approach is dubbed by the Quran as the 'great strive/*jihad*'.

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

"So obey not the disbelievers, but strive against them herewith with a great strive." (al-Furqan, 52)

The expression جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا, 'a great strive', in the above *ayah*, alludes to communicating the word of the Almighty with both speech and behavior and mobilizing all possible means to glorify the Truth, for the sake of uniting humankind with the guiding peace and happiness. Undertaking *jihad* by virtue of *tabligh*, or passing on the word of Truth, is doubtless more important and effective than taking up arms. Indeed, during the first few years, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, himself, undertook his *jihad* simply with the Quran.

Motivated with the purpose of guiding humankind, the Quran encourages on numerous instances to undertake "*jihad* in the way of Allah", only a section of which, however, pertains to *qital*, actual warfare, an option eligible only when the situation deems it necessary.

A majority of the battles in which the Noble Prophet ﷺ participated were defensive battles, as was the case in Badr, Uhud and Handak. Campaigns such as Muta and Tabuk were precautionary offensives taken to subdue probable attacks.

The capturing of Mecca, on the other hand, took place only due to the Meccan violation of the treaty only recently made, actuated with the intention of restoring the breached rights of Muslims. Thus in effect, a profound notion of compassion and justice underpinned all the battles the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ waged and a sure mercy did they give rise to. In Islam, warfare is certainly not aimed towards taking lives,[325] seizing spoils, laying destruction on Earth, obtaining personal gains or giving vent to feelings of revenge; much the contrary, it carries the purpose of eliminating oppression, ensuring freedom of belief, leading mankind to guidance and purging all kinds of injustice.

An overview of the all the battles the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was engaged in, shows in no uncertain terms the fact that a legitimate war cannot waged unless with the purpose of self-defense and *ila'yi kalimatullah*, that is upholding the word of the Almighty. Wars waged simply for the purpose of annexing territories are a disgrace to humanity. So far as Islam is concerned, a war must be grounded in the sublime purposes of spreading justice, providing means for guidance and obliterating oppression. In the words of the Quran:

مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِى الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ
النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

325. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, sent as a mercy to the worlds, followed such a policy of compassion throughout his entire 120 military campaigns -29 major battles (*ghazwa*) and 91 minor (*sariyya*)- that despite taking entire Arabia under his command, he never allowed the Muslim army to shed a drop of blood more than required. According to authentic reports, the number of Muslims martyred in the 120 military campaigns waged throughout 11 years, out of various reasons, is 340, in contrast to around 800 enemy casualties. This makes the number of casualties in the entire 120 battles less than 1200. Just to take the 29 campaigns personally led by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ; no swords were drawn in 16 of those, with the relevant purpose nonetheless realized. The remaining 13 saw an actual clash, leading to 140 martyrs and 335 enemy casualties.

Adopting a prudent and farsighted diplomatic approach, the Noble Messenger ﷺwas able to win the allegiance of many regions without needing to engage in battle. Many other places succumbed to him by virtue of accepting the word of guidance from beforehand. Considering this far more superior to fighting, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ refrained from resorting to the sword unless absolutely necessary. On other occasions, a prudent diplomacy matched with handy intelligence allowed him to dissuade the enemy from entering battle, ensuring thereby the amount of blood shed to remain at a minimum level. For a given campaign to culminate in favorable result, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would prefer to elect a commander who was either from that area by birth, or better still, a native of the rival tribe. The Prophet ﷺ was always emphatic to command his the army to keep their words, keep aloof from excess and killing people for no good reason, not to touch slaves, children, women, the elderly and monks or hermits living in retreat in monasteries, not to lay waste to trees and buildings. (See, Elşad Mahmudov, *Sebep ve Sonuçları İtibâriyle Hazret-i Peygamber'in Savaşları,* 2005, Marmara University, Institute for Social Sciences, an unpublished doctoral thesis.)

"…whosoever kills a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." (al-Maida, 32)

All strivings undertaken by Muslims, be it with their lives or wealth, motivated strictly by Islamic concerns within the guidelines aforementioned, are therefore bound to purchase a Divine blessing as great as Paradise in return. But, sincerity is vital here, no less than it is in other matters. Abdullah ibn Amr once asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to enlighten him as regards *jihad* and warfare.

"If, Abdullah," said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "you struggle only in hope of reaping the consent of Allah, then Allah shall resurrect you in the Hereafter as you are. But if you struggle out of pomp, to show off, you shall be resurrected as you are." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 24/2519)

Again, a Bedouin once asked the Noble Prophet ﷺ to comment on, "a person who fights for personal glory and praise, to get hold of spoils or just to show off." Then another person interjected, insisting that the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ tell him just what it is "to fight in the way of Allah, as many a person fights to quell his anger or out of heroism."

"Whoever fights to glorify Allah's religion above any other", replied the Blessed Prophet, "his *jihad* is in the way of Allah." (Bukhari, Ilm, 45; Muslim, Imara, 149-150)

"If a man", then another person began to ask, "wishes to fight in the way of Allah and at the same time attain something of the world…what would you say to that?"

"No reward shall await him", said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The answer proved excruciating for the Companions, simply due to the sheer difficulty of living up to that level of sincerity. So they urged the Companion, who had asked the last question to "Ask your question once more…it could be that you misunderstood the answer". They were only in hope of receiving a relieving response. Yet, it was of no avail, as even after three attempts, the response of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ remained unchanged. (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 24/2516)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ is known to have articulated many *ahadith* with regard to the virtue of *jihad*, some of which are:

"Standing guard, for a day and night, on the border is better than a month whose days are filled with fasting and nights with worship. If one passes away while standing guard, then the reward of what he is doing shall continue to flow until the Last Day; and abounding in blessings as a martyr, he will be safe in his grave from the angels of interrogation." (Muslim, Imara, 163)

"Standing guard on the border in the way of Allah just for a day is better than the whole world and what is within. Where your whip is destined to in Paradise is better than the world and what is within. An evening or an early morning stroll in the way of Allah is better than the world and what is within." (Bukhari, Jihad, 6, 73; Riqaq, 2; Muslim, Imara, 113-114)

"Regarding a person who sets out to jihad in His way, Allah the Almighty says, 'he has set out for no other way than Mine, with faith and affirmation of My prophets in his heart', and becomes his guarantor….a guarantor for a place in Paradise if he ends up a martyr, or for rewards and spoils if he survives. By Allah, in whose Hand of Might Muhammad's life resides, a wound opened up in the way of Allah will turn up in the Hereafter, in the same way it had been cleft, in the color of blood but smelling like musk." (Muslim, Imara, 103; Nasai, Iman, 24)

"Nobody who is made to enter Paradise will wish to return to Earth, for Paradise has whatever the world may have and more. Except for the martyr, who because of the treats he is blessed with, will wish to return to Earth ten times over, and hope for martyrdom each time." (Bukhari, Jihad, 21; Muslim, Imara, 108-109)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ articulates the core objective for the struggles and battles he participated in, in the following:

"I have been commanded to struggle against people until they affirm that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His prophet, offer salat and give alms. Once they embrace these, they will have saved their lives and property from me, except for the punishments decreed by Islam." (Bukhari, Iman, 17)

In view of that, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would never strike at night and wait until dawn, in case he might hear the calling of *adhan* coming from the town.[326] Before sending them out, he would emphatically command the units not to "… strike a place if you see a mosque or hear the *adhan* there." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 91/2635; Ahmad, III, 448-449)

Providing the below account is Muslim ibn Harith ﷺ:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had once sent a unit, of which I was also part, to a certain place. When we arrived at where we were supposed to strike, I sped up my horse, and got ahead of my friends. Soon I was met with some crying women and children.

'Would you like to salvage your lives?' I asked them. 'Yes', they ardently responded.

326. Bukhari, Adhan, 6; Muslim, Salat, 9.

'Then say *La ilaha ill'Allah Muhammadun Rasulullah* and save yourselves', I then told them. And they did. But then a few of my friends began to criticize me, on grounds that I had prevented them from seizing the awaiting spoils. Once we returned to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they informed him of what had happened. The Prophet ﷺ called me next to him, and convincingly, said:

"Allah has most definitely rewarded you in abundance for each of them." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 100-101/5080)

Burayda ﷺ explains:

"Before sending a troop out to *jihad*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would always advise the commander to conduct himself with piety towards Allah, and with virtue towards his fellow Muslims and treat them with care, then say:

'Fight in the way of Allah, in His name and battle with those who do not acknowledge Him. Do not be treacherous with spoils. Do not resort to brutality. Do not sever noses or ears. Do not slay the children. Once you encounter your enemies of nonbelief, invite them to accept one of three things: Invite them to Islam and let go of them if they accept. If they do not, then invite them to pay the tax of *jizya*, and again let go of them if they accept. If they reject that too, then trust in Allah and fight with them.'" (Muslim, Jihad, 3; Tirmidhi, Siyar, 48/1617; Ahmad, V, 353, 358)

Some Minor Campaigns

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ now wished to cut off the much used and vital Meccan trade route to Syria[327], and thereby throw the idolaters, still preoccupied with assaulting Muslims in Medina, denying them entrance into their hometowns and inciting the sentiments of hypocrites against them, into an unprecedented commercial and economical strife, and thus prevent them from gaining even

327. To curb Meccan enmity, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ initiated at first an economical and political e - bargo, for which purpose he began establishing diplomatical relations with neighboring tribes and organized military campaigns in pursuit of the trade caravans of Quraysh, which constituted virtually the heart of Meccan commerce and economy. Muhammad Hamidullah asserts, in relation, "The raids conducted against the caravans belonging to Quraysh should not be considered as plunder; for neither were Quraysh innocent, nor were the raiders a gang founded just for the purpose of pillaging just any caravan. A full fledged state of war, rather, had emerged between two city-states. A state of war hands over to each warring side the right to do damage to one another's life, property and other interests. The law of war had thus come into effect between both people. Such military expeditions are therefore certainly not simple interventions and plundering of caravans."
Another aspect that needs to be considered here is the fact that in all the military expeditions, Muslims had only and strictly attacked Meccan caravans. Despite being non-Believers, other tribes of the peninsula remained safe from these raids. (See, Hamidullah, *İslâm Peygamberi*, I, 219; *Hz. Peygamberin Savaşları*, p.56)

further strength against Muslims.[328] With this intention in mind, seven months after the Hegira, the Noble Prophet ﷺ sent thirty men from the *Muhajirun*, under the leadership of Hamza ؓ, to Sif'ul-Bahr.[329] (Rajab 8/November-December, 623)

Returning from Damascus, the trade caravan bound for Mecca had now made it to Sif'ul-Bahr, under the protection of three-hundred cavalrymen, including Abu Jahl. Just when two sides were getting in line in preparation for a seemingly inevitable clash, Majdi ibn Amr, an ally of both sides, intervened and dissuaded both sides from fighting. Upon hearing it, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was pleased with Majdi's intervention and praised his negotiating skills; in appreciation of which he sent Majdi's delegates, who later arrived, away with many presents.[330]

For the same purpose, eight months after the Hegira in the first days of the month of Shawwal, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ deployed under the leadership of Ubayda ibn Harith ؓ sixty to eighty *Muhajir*, to Rabigh.[331]

Lead by Abu Sufyan, Quraysh were around two-hundred in number. Apart from a light skirmish and the shooting of few arrows, both sides neither lined up nor drew their swords to fight. Shooting the first arrow that day was Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ؓ, who is therefore celebrated as the first arrow shooter of Islam. Fearing Muslims would be relieved with the arrival of back up forces, the idolaters retreated and both sides parted ways.

Although having become Muslim a while before, two Companions, Miqdad ibn Amr and Utbah ibn Ghazwan, who until then could not find the means to join the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in Medina, had joined the idolaters as a means to defect to the Muslim side and realize their wish. Immediately upon seeing the Muslim cavalrymen, they got away from the idolaters and sought refuge in Muslim ranks.[332]

Nine months following the Hegira, in the month of Dhil'qadah, the Noble Messenger sent a squad of eight men, (twenty according to other sources), commanded by Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ؓ, to Harrar.[333] (Dhil'qadah 1/ May, 623)

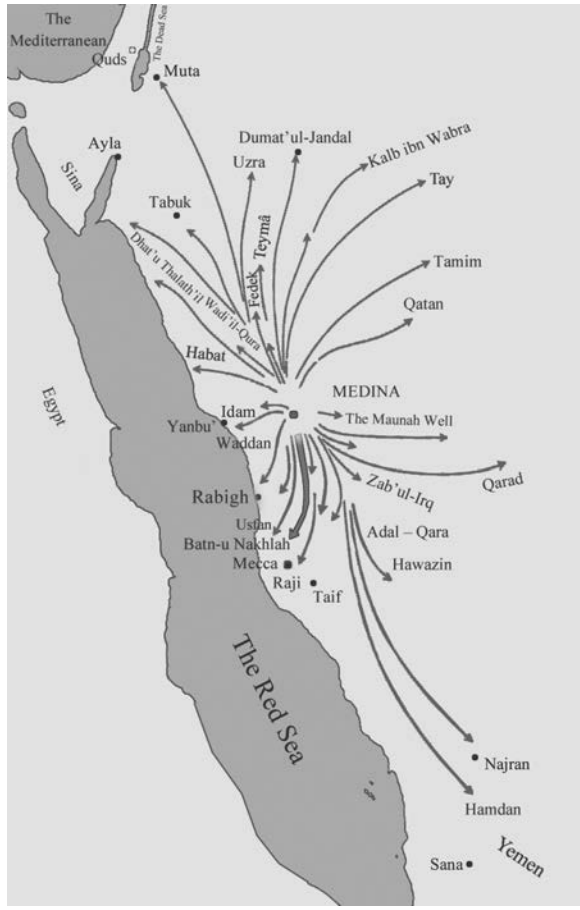
Saad ؓ himself recounts:

"The Messenger of Allah ordered me to, '…go until you reach Harrar, as the caravan of Quraysh will pass through there.' So taking cover at day and

328. Bukhari, Maghazî, 2; Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 22-23/3004.
329. Sif'ul-Bahr, in the region of Iys, where the clan of Juhayna used to reside, was given the name owing to its location by the shore. (*bahr* means sea)
330. Waqidi, I, 9-10; Ibn Saad, II, 6.
331. A valley passed by pilgrims on the way to Mecca, Rabigh is a valley located between Anwa and Juhfa, about a distance of 3 miles from the latter.
332. Ibn Hisham, II, 224-225; Waqidi, I, 10; Ibn Saad, II, 7.
333. Harrar is the name of a spring in Hijaz, near Juhfah. On the way from Juhfah to Mecca, it falls to the left of Mahajja near Ghadir'ul-Hum.

moving at night, we reached Harrar in the morning, after five days. But the caravan had apparently passed a day before. Had not the Messenger of Allah ordered me not to go beyond Harrar, I perhaps could have caught up with them."

The Companions returned to Medina, without coming to blows with the idolaters.[334]



Around the start of the eleventh month of Hegira, in Safar, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ personally led the Campaign of Abwa (Waddan)[335] (Safar 2/August, 623). This was the first campaign in which the Prophet of Allah ﷺ took part. Saad ibn Ubadah ؓ, of the Ansar, was left in charge in Medina.

The Campaign saw no heated clash with the idolaters, though a peace agreement was reached with the Clan of Damra, from the Kinanah tribe, compliant with which both sides were not to attack each other, and they, in addition, were not to engage in any aggression against Muslims and refrain from lending aid to their enemies. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had the pact confirmed in writing, ending the fifteen day Abwa Campaign[336]. This is only one of the many instances in testimony of the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ undying penchant for peace and his compassion towards other human beings.

334. Ibn Hisham, II, 238; Waqidi, I, 10; Ibn Saad, II, 7.
335. Abwa, a village between Furu and Juhfah, is around 23 miles away from Medina. The grave of the Prophet's ﷺ mother, the honorable Aminah, is found there. Waddan, situated between Mecca and Medina, is 8 miles away from Abwa, and is part of the land near Juhfah which used to belong to the tribes Damra, Ghifar and Kinanah.
336. Ibn Hisham, II, 223-224; Waqidi, I, 12; Ibn Saad, II, 8.

THE SECOND YEAR OF HEGIRA

The Batn'u Nakhlah Campaign and Others

Undertaken thirteen months subsequent to the Hegira, in Rabiulawwal, the Buwat Campaign,[337] was motivated with the purpose of checking the 2500 camel caravan of Quraysh, traveling under the surveillance of 100 cavalrymen (2 Rabiulawwal / September, 623). Leaving Saad ibn Muadh ﷺ of the *Ansar* as deputy, the Noble Messenger ﷺ left Medina with a force of 200 Muslims. They eventually returned, however, without entering any conflict.[338]

The Safawan Campaign[339], also known as *Badr'ul-Ula*, or the Badr Minor, also took place around about the same time to bring to justice Qurz ibn Jabir, who seized and escaped with the local owned camels and oxen grazing near Mount Jamma, in the small town of Aqiq, approximately three miles away from Medina. (Rabiulawwal, 2 / September 623). Temporarily assigned as the deputy of Medina, was Zayd ibn Haritha ﷺ. Despite reaching Safawan, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ eventually had to return to Medina, for Qurz had long fled. Qurz later became an eminent Muslim.[340]

The month of Jamaziyalakhir saw the Dhu'l-Ushayra Campaign, (Jamaziyalakhir, 2 / November 623) leading to the signing of a peace treaty with the clan of Mudlij and their allies.[341]

In the meantime, a unit commanded by the Prophet's ﷺ cousin Abdullah ibn Jahsh ﷺ, sent for exploration, struck a Meccan caravan near Batn'u Nakhlah. Rummaging for a while for the faintest excuse to raid Medina, the incident was enough to cause an upsurge of idolater emotion.

Galvanizing anti-Muslim sentiments in Mecca, the idolaters were moreover emphatically underlining the fact that the attack of their caravan had coincided with the month of Rajab, the sacred season of truce (*haram*), shouting, "Muhammad violated the months of truce…he shed blood, took hostages and seized our possessions!"

337. Buwat is a mountain among many others in the region formerly inhabited by Juwaynah, standing at a distance of 36 miles from Medina.
338. Waqidî, I, 12; Ibn Saad, II, 8-9.
339. Safawan is a valley in the vicinity of Badr.
340. Ibn Hisham, II, 238; Ibn Saad, II, 9; Ibn Athîr, *Usdu'l-Ghaba,* IV, 468.
341. Ibn Saad, II, 9-10.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had in fact never ordered an attack against the caravan and admonished Abdullah ﷺ, by stating:

"I never ordered you to fight in the sacred months of truce!" What's more, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ desisted from taking anything of the spoils, which threw the Companions into a state of dejection, fearing that Divine punishment was imminent.[342] But the Meccan use of the incident as material for anti-Muslim propaganda brought about the following Revelation:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللهِ
وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ
مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا

"They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: Fighting in it is a grave matter, and hindering men from Allah's way and denying Him, and hindering men from the Sacred Mosque and turning its people out of it, are still graver with Allah, and persecution is graver than slaughter; and they will not cease fighting with you until they turn you back from your religion." (al-Baqara, 217)

Relieved the most were Abdullah ibn Jahsh and his friends:

"Would we receive the same rewards, Messenger of Allah", they asked, "as those reserved for fighters in the way of Islam?" This brought about the below Revelation:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ
أُوْلَئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللهِ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

"Surely those who believed and those who fled (their home) and strove hard in the way of Allah these hope for the mercy of Allah and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (al-Baqara, 218)

Reinforcing the inner resolve of Muslims, such Divine declarations were at the same time infuriating idolaters and increasing their appetites for vengeance; though they really little needed Revelation, for they were already brimming over with hatred against Muslims, who were rapidly increasing by the day, adding further strength to the budding Islamic State. According to a census taken by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ,

342. Ibn Hisham, II, 241.

the number of male Muslims was reportedly 1500.[343] Considering that the number was only destined to further increase, it was an amount significant enough to give the idolaters plenty to think about. Medina was moreover situated by the Meccan trade route, the heart of Meccan life. Insofar as the idolaters were concerned, the danger needed subduing before it became too great to handle. So they resolved to attack Medina.

Hakam ibn Kaysan was among the prisoners taken in the attack at Batn'u Nakhlah. The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ invited him to Islam, explaining the way of truth many times over in all its detail, to quell any possible doubts that may arise in his mind. Annoyed at Hakam's tenacity in rejection despite all the trouble the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had gone through, Omar ؓ could not help himself:

"Why do you even bother with him, Messenger of Allah? By Allah, he will never become a Muslim. You may as well let me break his neck, so I can send him to Hell!" But the Noble Messenger ﷺ persisted in explaining Islam to Hakam, regardless. And this time, Hakam was all ears.

"What is Islam, again?" he asked.

"To be a servant of Allah, without ascribing any partners to Him, and to bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger."

"Then I accept Islam", Hakam then abruptly stated.

"Had I listened to you before", the Messenger of Allah ﷺ commented turning to the Companions, "Hakam would have now been in Hellfire!"

Omar ؓ later said:

"Seeing Hakam become a Muslim made me feel as if I had been overwhelmed by all past and entire future. I said to myself, 'What was I thinking suggesting something to the Messenger of Allah, when he knew better?' I then consoled myself, thinking my only intention all along was to gain the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger. Hakam did become a Muslim and what a perfect Muslim he was. He fought in the way of Allah and was martyred by the Mauna Well." (Ibn Sad, IV, 137-138; Waqidi, I, 15-16)

Understood from this incident is the need to communicate Islam patiently, in a gentle manner, adorning it with wisdom and good advice.

343. Bukhari, Jihad, 181.

The Changing of the Direction of *Qibla*

At the outset, Muslims continued offering their salat facing towards the *Masjid'ul-Aqsa*, in Jerusalem, something which continued sixteen or seventeen months into the Hegira. The Jews were using the practice as a pretext to verbally assert their supremacy over the Muslims, a cause of much grief for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. All along, he had his heart set on the Kaabah as *qibla*, which could have provided the first step to the opening of Mecca to Islam. He was yearning to receive a Revelation in regard. And since the Divine permission had not yet come, the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ thought remained a mere wish, the realization of which he began patiently anticipating. Ultimately, on a Monday in mid Rajab, as the Noble Messenger ﷺ was offering the midday salat of zuhr in the small mosque in the quarters of the Salima clan, the Almighty revealed His tidings:

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِى السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَيهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ.

"Indeed We see the turning of your face to heaven, so We shall surely turn you to a qibla which you shall like; turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, turn your face towards it, and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord; and Allah is not at all heedless of what they do." (al-Baqara, 144)

Meanwhile at the closing stages of the second *rakah*, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ immediately turned his direction towards Kaabah, and so did the Companions who were following his lead. Together, they all began facing their new *qibla*, whereby the remaining two *rakahs* of the salat were completed facing Kaabah. The mosque has since been called *Masjid'ul-Qiblatayn*, the mosque with two *qiblas*.[344]

A Companion who was present behind the Prophet ﷺ dropped in on another *masjid* after leaving, where he saw a group of people offering their salat together. They had just bowed to *ruku'*, when he exclaimed:

"By Allah, we just offered our salat with the Messenger of Allah towards Kaabah!" The group thereupon instantly changed their direction towards Kaabah.

As exuberantly welcomed as it was by the Believers, the changing of the *qibla* towards Kaabah enticed the idolaters, Jews and hypocrites to fabricate certain

344. Ibn Saad, I, 241-242.

rumors and entertain themselves with unfounded claims, to which the Revelation below responded:

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّيهُمْ
عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِى كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلّٰهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ
يَهْدِى مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ.

"The fools among the people will say: What has turned them from their qiblah which they had? Say: The East and the West belong only to Allah; He guides whom He likes to the right path." (al-Baqara, 142)[345]

Ibn Abbas ﷺ affords the following:

"Upon changing the *qibla* to Kaabah compliant with the command of the Quran, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was met with a question by Muslims:

'What about the salats of our brothers, Messenger of Allah, who offered it to the direction of *Masjid'ul-Aqsa* and are now deceased?'

Thereupon the Almighty revealed the below *ayah*:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ
عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِى كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ
الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ
هَدَى اللّٰهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

"Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the Messenger may be a witness against you. And We appointed the qibla which you formerly observed only that We might know him who followes the messenger, from him who turneth on his heels. In truth it was a hard (test) save for those whom Allah guided. But it was not Allah's purpose that your faith should be in vain, for Allah is Full of Pity, Merciful toward mankind.' (al-Baqara, 143)[346]

The change of *qibla* was indeed a significant event. The invalidation of the previous *qibla*, which the Divine command entailed, was a matter suitable to cause a stir of rumors that could have potentially tricked many away from the truth. The Divine

345. Bukhari, Iman 30, Salat 31; Muslim, Masajid 11.
346. Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 2/2964.

commands regarding the new *qibla* have therefore been repeated a few times over, addressing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in person, then the Believers and finally both, and confirming in no uncertain manner, that they were henceforth obliged to hold fast to their new *qibla*, both in residence and travel.[347]

Elucidating to some extent the underlying wisdom of the change, the confirmation is virtually given an independent meaning in the *ayah* below:

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ.

"And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are turn your faces towards it, so that people shall have no accusation against you, except such of them as are unjust; so do not fear them, and fear Me, that I may complete My favor on you and that you may walk on the right course." (al-Baqara, 150)

From the Divine declaration, we can derive a number of underlying wisdoms:

1. The first wisdom underlying the change of *qibla*, according to the *ayah*, was to dispossess the People of the Book and the idolaters from any evidence they may have held against Muslims; for the changing of the *qibla* towards Kaabah was included among the feats of the Final Prophet mentioned in previous scriptures.

Indeed, the passages of the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament forecasting the future of Mecca make explicit indications. That the Final Prophet ﷺ was still offering salat towards the direction of *al-Aqsa* when he was really supposed to turn towards Kaabah could have thus cast doubt on the minds of the People of the Book.

Moreover, defying the *qibla* of Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام would have contradicted the Noble Messenger's ﷺ contention of representing the Nation of Ibrahim, an argument which then could have been used as a sound objection by the idolaters. But after the actual change, such an objection could no longer be made, except by the obstinate, who had made a habit of obscuring the truth.[348]

2. The Almighty's fulfillment of His blessings upon Muslims is another wisdom underlying the change of *qibla*. Believers were thereby given the new *qibla* as a contribution towards their ultimate aim of perfection on the path of Truth, the actual blessing, of which the *qibla* constitutes a part.

347. See, al-Baqara, 148-149.
348. See, Elmalılı, I, 537.

3. One of the wisdoms that lay beneath the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ offered his salats in the beginning months towards the *Bayt'ul-Maqdis* was to allude to the common source of all celestial religions and thus warm Jewish and Christian hearts to Islam. This approach could furthermore be considered to have at least reduced the Jewish and Christian dissent during the budding of the Islamic society and state.

At the same time, the incident serves as a proof, among many others, that the Noble Prophet ﷺ did not exercise an authority to intervene on the Holy Quran. In spite of nurturing a great desire for Kaabah to be the new direction of worship, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ nevertheless was made to wait a further sixteen months after the Hegira, which saw the relevant Revelation arrive.

Fasting, the Charity of *Fitr* and Alms

Strengthening its political existence through the minor campaigns, Islam at the same time continued to perfect its unique spiritual life. An important part of this was the requirement upon Muslims to fast during the month of Ramadan, proclaimed obligatory just after the change of *qibla*, eighteen months into the Hegira, in the month of Shaban.[349]

It was through the below *ayah* that the Almighty declared the fasting, or *sawm*, of Ramadan obligatory:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

"O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil)." (al-Baqara, 183)

In connection are the words of the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ :

"Islam has been founded upon five principles: Standing witness that there is no god other than Allah and that Muhammad is His Prophet, offering salat, giving alms, pilgrimage and fasting in the month of Ramadan." (Bukhari, Iman, 1, 2; Tafsir, 2/30; Muslim, Iman, 19-22)

Beautifully expressed are the virtues of fasting in the below hadith of the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

"Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious, has said, 'Apart from fasting, all deeds of man are for himself. But fasting is for Me alone; thus I shall personally give its

349. Ibn Saad, I, 248.

reward.' Fasting is a shield. When fasting, one ought not to engage in foul words or quarrel. Should someone speak foul to him or provoke him, he should simply say, 'I am fasting.' By Allah, in whose Hand of Might the life of Muhammad resides, in the sight of Allah, the breath of a person fasting is sweeter than the fragrance of musk. Two moments of joy await one who fasts: One in which he breaks his fast, and the other, the moment he unites with his Lord with the rewards reaped from his fasting." (Bukhari, Sawm, 9; Muslim, Siyam, 163)

"All deeds of man are amply rewarded; a good deed is multiplied from ten to seven-hundred times. Allah, glory unto Him, declares, 'But fasting is different, and I shall reward it Myself…for one who fasts leaves his lust and appetite for Me." (Muslim, Siyam, 164)

"One who persistently gives charity in the way of Allah, will be called from the numerous gates of Paradise, 'Come, beloved servant of Allah; through this gate awaits goodness and abundance!' Those who persistently offer their salat continue being invited from the gate of salat, strivers from the gate of *jihad*, fasters from the gate of *Rayyan* and the generous from the gate of charity." Abu Bakr ﷺ then asked, 'May my all be sacrificed in your way, Messenger of Allah. Even though one who is called from either of these gates stands in no need of any other, still, will there be people who will be called from all of these gates?'

"Yes, certainly", replied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, "and I am hoping you will be among those fortunate." (Bukhari, Sawm, 4 Jihad, 37; Muslim, Zakat, 85, 86)

Enabling us to realize the value of the innumerable blessings we have been endowed with, fasting is a deed of worship that awakens feelings of gratitude towards the Almighty; and through ridding the soul of egoistic desires and tendencies, it frees the heart from the shackles of matter and thereby guides one to patience, the highest moral characteristic attainable. Imparting a conscience of relating to the poor and underprivileged, fasting also fills the heart with feelings of compassion. Despite being given command over bountiful chests of treasures, Yusuf ﷺ never ate to his stomach's content, just so he would not remain ignorant, even for a moment, of the condition of the poor.

With all these underlying wisdoms, fasting is a Divine command that exercises the greatest influence in cleansing ill-feelings like malice and jealousy that suffocate society in their uproar. In fasting lies the key to the mystery of abandoning the temporary for the eternal. It is a shield that protects human dignity and honor against the never-ending desires of the self, in the way of consumption and lust.

Its days already revived through fasting, making the nights of Ramadan further prosper is the *tarawih* salat, a Sunnah of the Light of Being ﷺ.

"Allah the Mighty has made fasting obligatory in Ramadan; and I have made *tarawih* a Sunnah," he has stated. (Ibn Maja, Salat, 173)

To reap the utmost benefit from Ramadan, it is necessary to accompany the day long fasts with deeds of worship in the night and, refraining from all kinds of vain behavior, cleanse the tongue with prayer and *dhikr* and the heart with tears of repentance. Entering *itiqaf* in the last ten days of the month is an equally important Sunnah of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"Whoever", he states "with faith in his heart, revives his Ramadan nights hoping its reward from Allah only, will have his entire past sins forgiven." (Bukhari, Tarawih, 46)

Aisha ﵂ a recounts:

"During a Ramadan evening, the Messenger of Allah had offered a voluntary salat at the *Masjid*. Many people followed his lead behind him. Come morning, some Companions began talking about 'the Prophet's salat at the Masjid the night before.'

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ offered the salat the next night, too. People again spoke about it; the number of those who joined had increased even more. On either the third evening or the fourth, people again flocked together at the *Masjid*. So great were they in number that the Masjid could not fit them all. But the next evening, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not make an appearance. In the morning, he said:

'I have seen what you have been doing. What held me back from coming next to you last night was the fear that this salat may be made obligatory.'" (Bukhari, Tarawih, 1; Muslim, Musafirin, 177)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ did not offer the *tarawih* salat communally, considering it more appropriate for each person to fulfill the deed according to their capabilities. *Tarawih* continued being offered individually during the caliphate of Abu Bakr ﵁. Only during the caliphate of Omar ﵁ did it begin to be offered communally.

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ would enhance his devotion and deeds of worship in the month of Ramadan, entering an insatiable atmosphere of an intimate connection with the Almighty. Testifying this are the words of Ibn Abbas ﵄:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most generous of all people. The time which his generosity seemed boundless was when he would meet with Jibril ﵇ in the month of Ramadan. They would get together during each night of Ramadan and recite the Quran to one another. After meeting Jibril –upon him peace-, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would hence become more generous than winds of mercy that continually blow." (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Wahy, 5, 6; Sawm, 7; Muslim, Fadail, 48, 50)

Commanded not long after fasting were the salat of *eid* and charity of *fitr*. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ laid down the obligatory amount of *fitr* for every Muslim, young and old, male and female, free or slave, as a *sa'*[350] of dates or an equal measure of barley.[351] And concerning the underprivileged, he said, "Save them today (*eid*) from walking around on an empty stomach." (Ibn Saad, I, 248)

If given before the salat of *eid*, the charity of *fitr* fulfils its purpose and is accepted. But if given after the salat, then though it is accepted as charity, does not count as *fitr*.[352]

Anas ﷺ explains:

"At the time when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ arrived in Medina, the locals observed two festivals during which they held celebrations. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ then inquired as to the significance of these two festivals. 'It was these two days we used to celebrate in the days of ignorance', they replied.

'Allah has replaced your two festivals with another two better than them', then said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. 'Adha and Ramadan!'" (Abu Dawud, Salat, 239/1134; Nasai, Iydayn, 1)

After leading the *eid* salat for the first time on the 10th of Dhilhijjah, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ordered Muslims to slaughter stock for sacrifice. In his ten year stay in Medina, the Noble Messenger observed the sacrifice of *eid* every year.[353] Each year he would offer two sacrifices; one on behalf of the members of his *ummah* who lacked the means to do so, and the other for himself and his family.[354]

Hanash ﷺ narrates:

"I saw Ali ﷺ slaughter two rams for sacrifice. When I asked him the reason, he replied, 'before passing away, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ requested me to offer sacrifice on his behalf, too. So I'm slaughtering another to fulfill his request and will continue to do so each year.'" (Abu Dawud, Adahi, 1-2/2790; Ahmad, I, 107)

From the *fajr* salat of the eve of the *eid* of Adha until the *asr* salat of the fourth day of the *eid*, a total of twenty-three salats, all Muslims, male or female, residents or travelers, whether offering individually or communally, are required (*wajib*) to say the *takbir'ut-tashriq*:[355]

350. A *sa'* is a volumetric scale that can fit approximately 1040 dirhams of wheat or barley. According to the *shari* dirham, a *sa'* weighs 2,917 kgs, and 3,333 kgs according to the customary dirham.
351. Bukhari, Zakat, 70-78; Muslim, Zakat, 13.
352. Ibn Maja, Zekât, 21.
353. Ibn Saad, I, 248-249.
354. Abû Dawud, Adahi, 3-4/2792; Ibn Saad, I, 249.
355. Muwatta, Hajj, 205.

اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ وَلِلّٰهِ الْحَمْدُ

Shortly after the charity of *fitr*, there came the command for alms or *zakat*. The Quran proclaims:

وَفِى أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

"And in their wealth the beggar and the outcast had due share." (adh-Dhariyat, 19)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

"…who are active in deeds of charity." (al-Muminun, 4)

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا
وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَّهُمْ

"Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them; surely your prayer is a relief to them…" (at-Tawba, 103)

Zakat is mentioned twenty-six times in the Quran alongside salat and four times on its own. Among the latter is the *ayah* in *surah* al-Muminun, which although is given mention independent of salat, is only a continuing praise of Believers who uphold their salats. The reason for this joint reference is that among all deeds of worship, physical or financial, it is these two that are the most essential and are of equal importance. A *hadith* in fact declares:

"There is no goodness in the salat of one, who does not give alms despite offering salat." (Haythami, III, 62)

Alms cannot be accepted by corporate entities such as schools or hospitals, insofar as its receival remains the right of the eight groups of people determined by the Almighty.[356] Given they do receive *zakat*, such corporations may not spend it for any other cause than for the basic needs of the underprivileged. They may only use it on, say, needy students or those seeking knowledge simply for the pleasure of Allah, glory unto Him, and therefore devoid of the means to work for their living. Among the prerequisites of *zakat* is to give where it may best cover the basic needs (*hawaij-i asliyya*) of the underprivileged who cannot make ends meet, and to do adequate research to ascertain people in such conditions. Corporations given the

356. See, Tawba, 60.

duty of acting as mediums in delivering *zakat* must therefore approach this issue with utmost sensitivity, lest they are held responsible in the sight of the Almighty.

The Quran classifies the rightful recipients of *zakat* as follows:

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللهِ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.

"Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debts and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer; an ordinance from Allah; and Allah is knowing, Wise." (at-Tawba, 60)

Corporate entities like foundations and associations may thus only receive *zakat* on the condition that they deliver to any one of these eight groups. This is something of tremendous importance.

Upon receiving the Divine proclamation concerning alms, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had a manuscript written, spelling out which commodities came under *zakat*, of what ratio they were to be given and the minimum amount of wealth needed for obligation, which he then tied to his sword. He had the manuscript by his side till the day he breathed his last and acted in strict accordance with it. Both Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ followed the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to the letter.[357]

Zakat is interwoven with numerous individual and social reasons of wisdom. Building a barrier against the probable transgressions of the rich who may come under the spell of their wealth, preventing the needy from fostering feelings of dissent against the rich, safeguarding social harmony and bonding its members together with love, are just to cite a few. In the Islamic social order, the deeds of *zakat* and *infaq*, or charity, are the keystones in maintaining balance and love between the rich and the poor.

Another wisdom underlying alms and charity is to thwart individual capital from excess growth and thereby protect the poor from exploitation before it ever happens and to eradicate the potential growth of hatred and dissent. Richness, taken as a means for pride and conceit, is only the precursor of a pitiful end awaiting the rich. The truth is that all members of a society, both the helpers and the helped, stand in a physical and spiritual need for each other.

357. Bukhari, Zakat, 38; Ahmad, II, 14.

It should be remembered that, in the absolute sense, wealth belongs only to Allah, glory unto Him. The power human beings exercise over wealth is analogous to time-sharing which has become fashionable of late. Simpler put, wealth is a trust handed over only temporarily by the Almighty. The manner of its use is therefore bound by certain Divine measures. It should be put to use appropriate to the way commanded by its True Owner. Used defiantly against Divine commands, wealth becomes the ultimate means of driving one to deviation through conceit and indulgence in injustice. The love of wealth becomes entrenched in the heart of people steered into this tragic path. Among all the blessings on earth, the fact that Allah, glory unto Him, mentions only wealth and children as causes of *fitna*, or tribulation, is due to the ease with which they enter the heart and become idolized therein. Against those who have fallen in the depths of this misery, the Almighty delivers the below warning:

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ يَوْمَ يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِى نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ
وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَـذَا مَا كَنَزْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ

"…and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement! On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it; this is what you hoarded up for yourselves, therefore taste what you hoarded." (at-Tawba, 34-35)

The pitiful plight of those who neglect giving their *zakat* is also illustrated by the Noble Messenger ﷺ :

"'Each piece of gold or silver whose alms were not given on Earth shall be heated in the Hereafter and brought in the form of a panel to their owners, and be used to scald their sides, foreheads and backs. Each time they cool down, they will be reheated to continue the punishment. This will continue for a day equivalent to fifty-thousand years, until the verdicts of mankind are given. In the end, the person will see his path lead either to Paradise or Hell.'

'What about the camels whose alms are withheld?' the Companions present then asked.

'Each camel owner who does not pay their camels' due –and that includes milking them at waterheads and giving it to the needy- will be made to lie down on a straight, vast field,' replied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. 'With not even a single calf left back, the camels will then come in their fleshiest conditions, and stomp on the person with their hoofs and gnaw away at him with their teeth. Once they are done,

the other camels will follow. This will continue for a day equivalent to fifty-thousand years, until the verdicts of mankind are given. In the end, the person will see his path lead either to Paradise or Hell.'

When the Companions posed another question regarding the fate of cattle and sheep owners, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave similar responses." (Muslim, Zakat, 24; Bukhari, Jihad, 48)

A polite approach when giving charity and alms, is just as important. One needs to abstain from behavior that could annul these deeds altogether, like insults or offering from low quality goods. The benefactor, especially, needs to be in a grateful state of mind towards the receiver, for providing him with an opportunity to fulfill an obligatory duty he otherwise would not have been able to fulfill. Charities at the same time act as impenetrable shields protecting the benefactor against illness and misfortune. The underprivileged are in fact a great blessing for the rich, for it is their prayers that open the gates of Paradise.

Spelling out the appropriate manners to adopt when giving charity is the *ayah* below:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُواْ مَنًّا
وَلَا أَذًى لَّهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.
قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى وَاللهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ.
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِى
يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

"As for those who spend their property in the way of Allah, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. Kind speech and forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury; and Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing. O you who believe! Do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his property to be seen of men and does not believe in Allah and the last day…" (al-Baqara, 262-264)

Itiqaf

Itiqaf literally means to detain oneself and wait in a certain place, as well as to hold fast to and stick by a certain thing. Technically, however, *itiqaf* denotes staying

in a *masjid* for a specific amount of time, with the intention of gaining closeness to the Allah, glory unto Him. Because of the fact that no time limit has specifically been laid down, a stay of the kind, even if it be merely for an hour, counts as *itiqaf*, albeit a supererogatory one. Yet, the *ayah*:

وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ

"…but do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in the mosques…" (al-Baqara, 187), indicates that fasting constitutes a necessary feature of *itiqaf*, suggesting therefore that the valid period of *itiqaf* may be no less than a day – and that is the *shari itiqaf*. *Itiqaf* has therefore generally been practiced during Ramadan, by virtue of staying inside a mosque in the state of fasting. *Itiqaf* is hence an immersion in servanthood through fasting during the day and spending the nights in the *masjid* worshipping and indulging in *dhikr*.

Itiqaf, as practiced during the final ten days of Ramadan, is a *muakkad sunnah*, (a strong sunnah that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ very rarely neglected) and at the same time a *fard'ul-kifaya* (an obligatory deed which, though not compulsory for all, nonetheless requires at least one person in a community to fulfill it, in order for all to become exempt from the responsibility). A vow to enter *itiqaf* necessitates its fulfillment. Entering *itiqaf* at times other than the month of Ramadan is recommended (*mustahab*).

Itiqaf compels one to be careful not to leave the *masjid* except to see to needs of necessity, like *wudu*, for instance.

The wives of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to enter *itiqaf* in their own rooms. Tents previously set up inside the *Masjid* to accommodate them during *itiqaf* were dismantled with the order of the Prophet ﷺ. Not mosques but their rooms at their homes serve Muslim women as the most appropriate places for *itiqaf*.

Aisha ﵂ says:

"In the final ten days of Ramadan, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would spend his nights worshipping; he would awaken his family, and commit himself entirely to worship, severing all relation with his wives." (Bukhari, Fadlu Laylat'il-Qadr, 5; Muslim, Itiqaf, 7)

Again, according to the report of the Aisha ﵂, until breathing his last, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ continued to enter *itiqaf* in the last ten days of Ramadan, completing that to twenty in his final year. The practice lived on with his wives following his passing away.[358]

358. Bukhari, Itikaf, 1, 17; Muslim, Itikaf, 5.

The following incident gives a superb indication of the importance and value of entering *itiqaf*, underlining at the same time the need to be mindful with individual and social duties:

"Ibn Abbas ﷺ one day entered the *Masjid* for *itiqaf* and greeted another man, assuming a seat on the ground next to him.

'You look tired and upset, my brother', said Ibn Abbas.

'Yes, indeed so, cousin of the Prophet' he replied. 'So and so had set me free in return for which I am supposed to pay him a certain amount…but by the right of the man (the Prophet) lying in that grave over there, I cannot pay him back.'

'Do you want me to have a word to him on your behalf?' asked Ibn Abbas ﷺ.

'It is up to you', responded the man. Just as Ibn Abbas ﷺ had grabbed his shoes and was making his way out the *Masjid*, the man called out to him:

'Did you forget you are in *itiqaf*?

'I certainly did not. But let me tell you one thing I heard from the man lying in that grave' said Ibn Abbas ﷺ, with tears trickling from his eyes:

'Pursuing and sorting out a brother's need is better than a ten year *itiqaf*…and if one enters *itiqaf* for a day only for the pleasure of Allah, Allah creates between him and Hellfire three ditches…and width of each is as much as that between East and West." (Bayhaki, Shuab'ul-Iman, III, 424-425)

The Battle of Badr Major (17 Ramadan 2/ 13 March 624)

Quraysh sent an enormous trade caravan in the second year of Hegira made up of a thousand camels strong, with an estimated worth of 50,000 dinars provided by the entire town, men and women alike, bound for the Gaza Fair in Damascus. Thirty to forty prominent idolaters took part in the journey, most notably Abu Sufyan, Muhammad ibn Nawfal and Amr ibn As.

The idolaters had already sensed that in retaliation to denying them entrance into Mecca, the Believers would in all likelihood try to cut off their vital trade route to Syria. Full-blown fear began caving in on their return from Damascus. Abu Sufyan hired Damdam ibn Amr, who was part of the caravan at the time, for 85 grams of gold, and immediately sent him from Tabuk to Mecca to report the urgency of the situation.[359]

359. Ibn Hisham, II, 244; Waqidi, I, 27-28.

Meanwhile, three nights prior to Damdam's arrival in Mecca, Atiqah, the Noble Prophet's ﷺ aunt, saw a frightening dream. She recounted the dream to her brother Abbas.

"The dream I saw rattled me", she said. "I fear that something terrible might happen to your tribe. Keep what I am about to tell you a secret; do not tell anyone!"

"Go on…what did you see?"

"A man astride a camel came and stood at Abtah (between Muhassab and Mecca) and declared aloud, three times, 'Listen up, you bunch of insincere people! Report within three days to the field of battle, to the spots where you shall fall!' People who heard him flocked around. The man then entered the courtyard of Kaabah and the others followed. With everyone swarmed around him, the man, again, repeated aloud the same words before, this time behind Kaabah. He then ascended Mount Abu Qubays and did the same thing there. Afterward, he grabbed hold of a rock and rolled it down. Rolling its way down the mountain, the rock then exploded tremendously near the base and there was neither a house, nor a spot left in Mecca left untouched by its pieces."

"This sounds like an important dream, I swear", commented Abbas. "Whatever you do, do not tell anyone about it!"

Later on, after parting ways with Atiqah ﵂, Abbas ﵁ stumbled upon his friend Walid ibn Utbah. Abbas told him of the dream, nonetheless insisting him to keep a closed lid on it. But worried, Walid told his father and soon, the dream became the word on everybody's lips in Mecca.

Abbas ﵁ recounts the developments thereafter.

"Abu Jahil was furious and asked me, 'Since when have you also had a female prophet? Wasn't a male prophet sufficient enough that your women also saw themselves fit for the role? Atiqah apparently heard someone telling Quraysh in her dream to report to where they shall fall within three days. We will wait three days. If what she heard is true, then certainly something will come up. But if three days pass and nothing comes up, then we will have it written down that your women are the greatest liars among the entire Arab women!'

Despite of the excruciating difficulty of denying it, I told him there was no such thing. On the third morning of Atiqah's dream, infuriated, I headed towards Kaabah hoping to find Abu Jahl there and give vent to my frustration for having held back what he deserved to hear over what he had said three days before. Just as I was entering, he was immediately making his way out, heading out from the Sahm gate of the Sacred House, which had me thinking, 'the scoundrel avoided me for he

knew I wanted to have a go at him'. Little did I know that he had in fact heard the voice of Damdam. But soon I too found out, as I from a distance I saw Damdam, who, to draw attention to the urgency of the situation, had slashed his camel's nose, shredded his shirt and turned his saddle the other way round. He was in the middle of the valley of Mecca, screaming at the top of his shrill voice:

'The caravan, Quraysh, the caravan! Muhammad and his men have raided your properties you had left under the surveillance of Abu Sufyan! You have no time to waste in catching up with them…Help, help!' The shouting of Damdam made us forget about all rest else." (Ibn Hisham, II, 244-247; Waqidi, I, 29-31)

Quraysh wasted no time in getting prepared. It only took two or three days for them to be armed and ready. Weapons were purchased for those without, and the wealthy took great pains in aiding the weak in their preparation. Notables like Suhayl ibn Amr, Zama bin Aswad were animatedly proclaiming in the streets of Mecca:

"Camels and food are on us, more than you can ever imagine! All of you set out! Let there not be even a single person remaining back! If Muhammad seizes the caravan, he will most certainly use it to sponsor his march into Mecca!"

Almost the entire men of Mecca joined the crew and those who could not, hired and sent others in their place. Come the day when Abu Jahl ordered the troops to mount their rides and march, Umayya ibn Khalaf began dragging his feet, sensing deep inside it would be his final march out of Mecca, for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Trustworthy, had already foretold of the doom awaiting him a while back.

"I swear, Muhammad never lies when he speaks", he was saying, overcome with tremendous fear. Eventually, the persistent nagging of Abu Jahl persuaded him to set out.

When Utbah ibn Rabia and his brother Shaybah began grooming their weapons, their slave Addas asked him as to what they were getting ready for.

"Do you remember the man who you offered dates at our vineyard in Taif?" they asked.

'Certainly, I do!"

"We are going to fight him!"

Addas fell at their feet and began pleading.

"Do not go! He is a prophet! You will only meet your doom!" Tears had trickled down to his cheeks. Utbah and Shaybah remained indifferent to the plea and left regardless.

The idolaters were nine-hundred and fifty to a thousand in number. A hundred or two-hundred of those were on horseback while the other seven-hundred were on camels. Most were armored. All the notables of Quraysh were there, accompanied by slave girls, playing their drums to the beat of anti-Muslim poems they were fervently chanting as they headed out of Mecca.[360]

It was the second year of Hegira, the twelfth of Ramadan. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ left Abdullah ibn Ummi Maqtum ؓ in Medina to lead the salats and left Medina with an army of three-hundred and thirteen Believers, sixty-four of them from *Muhajirun* and the rest from *Ansar*. Three were on horseback, seventy were on camelback and the rest were on foot.[361]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ halted the army of Believers at Buyut'us-Suqya, a mile out of Medina, and commanded the return of the elderly and the juvenile. Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ؓ recounts:

"Moments before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began ordering the youngsters to return, I saw my brother Umayr trying to hide.

'What are you trying to do?' I asked him.

'I am worried the Messenger of Allah ﷺ might see me and tell me to go back', he said, 'but I so dearly want to come, in hope that I may perhaps be martyred!'

Indeed, upon catching a glimpse of him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw that he was too young and advised him to go back. But then Umayr began to cry, so much that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ allowed him to remain. As he had a slender frame, I tied his sword around him. Umayr was around sixteen when he was martyred at Badr." (Waqidi, I, 21; Ibn Sad, III, 149-150)

Owing to a shortage of camels, three people took turns to ride each camel. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ shared his with Ali and Abu Lubabah ؓ. When it was the Prophet's ﷺ turn to walk, they insisted he remain on the camel and let them walk instead. But the Noble Prophet ﷺ said, "Neither can you handle the strain of walking more than I, nor do I stand in less need of gaining rewards than you!" (Ibn Sad, II, 21; Ahmad, I, 422)

360. Waqidi, I, 31-39; Bukhari, Manaqib, 25; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah,* III, 294-295.
361. Waqidi, I, 23-24; Ibn Hisham, II, 250-251; Ibn Saad, II, 12.

This attitude crystallizes the profound love for the Almighty the Blessed Prophet ﷺ nurtured inside and his enthusiasm in gaining an even greater closeness to Allah, glory unto Him, with each deed and moment. No less, he teaches the necessity of abiding by justice, no matter who the person is or what the circumstances may entail.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ later sent Abu Lubabah ﷺ back to Medina to act as deputy until their return.[362]

Recognizing no other refuge than Allah, glory unto Him, referring to Him all his needs and unable to bear seeing his *ummah* so weak and underprivileged on their way to Badr, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ uttered the following prayer:

"Allah…Give them their rides for they have none! Clothe them for they are naked! Feed them for they are hungry!"

Indeed, once victory at the field of Badr came, each Believer returned home with one or two camels, clothes and on a full stomach. (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 145/2747)

In these strenuous days which coincided with the month of Ramadan, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ordered the Believers to break their fasts, for they needed all the physical strength they could garner prior to the battle. All Muslim men who took part in Badr adjourned their fasts until their return.

The first army of Islam was making its way towards Badr. They had arrived at the Valley of Aqiq when two men, Hubayb ibn Yasaf and Qays ibn Muharris, who wanted to join the army solely for the purpose of taking a share of spoils, caught upto them.

"Did you set out with us in the first place?" asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Hubayb.

"No", replied he. "But you are our neighbor and cousin from your mother's side. So we joined to aid our people and lay claim on the spoils!"

"Do you believe in Allah and His Messenger?" this time asked the Noble Prophet ﷺ. When Hubayb answered in the negative, he was met with the following response:

"Then return, for we do not want the help of an idolater!"

Hubayb would not take no for an answer. "Everybody knows how courageous I am on the battlefield and the amount of damage I can exact on the enemy!" he said. "Can't I simply fight on your side in return for some spoils?"

362. Ibn Hisham, II, 251.

"No. Become a Muslim first then fight!" replied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, moments before he continued leading the army on their path.

But not long after, Hubayb caught up once again and restated his offer. The answer remained unchanged, however. Hubayb was confused. He after all had an illustrious reputation among Arabs for his gallant feats on battlefields. Still, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was not allowing him entry, for the sole reason that he was not a Muslim. The Prophet's ﷺ dignified attitude, in spite of the glaring difference between the strength of the Believers and the force the idolaters in all likelihood had mobilized, had shaken Hubayb to the core. For a moment, he let himself go in the depths of his inner world and was able to see the lights of a realm of truth he had never before seen. Then, getting up, he ran to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. This time he had something else in mind.

"Yes", he passionately exclaimed. "I believe in Allah and His Messenger!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was visibly happy. "Now, you may join as you wish", he said. (Muslim, Jihad, 150; Tirmidhi, Siyar 10/1558; Waqidi, I, 47; Ibn Sad, III, 535)

The incident provides a standard of *iman*, according to which irrespective of how demanding a given circumstance may be, a wrong means or method must never be utilized to achieve a right purpose. What one instead ought to do is take all the necessary precautions and then keep trust in the Almighty. By virtue of denying Hubayb from joining the Muslim army for the reason that he had not yet affirmed *iman*, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ has provided, for his *ummah* to come, an exemplary attitude that is motivated by a profound sensitivity of *iman*. The great Prophet ﷺ very well knew that all forms of help and grace came only from Allah, glory unto Him, in Whom he sought refuge in all circumstances and to Whom he turned to at all times. The approach is a quintessential example and a living case in point of the *tawakkul*, reliance in the Almighty only, made mentioned in the *ayah*:

حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

"Allah is sufficient for us; He is the best protector." (Al'i Imran, 173)

Hudayfah ﷺ narrates:

"We had set out with my father Husayl. The Qurayshi idolaters held us back, accusing us of '…wanting to join Muhammad's ranks'. But we assured them we were going to Medina to settle some other affair. Thereupon they made us swear an oath

that we would not join the Messenger of Allah and fight by his side. Once we eventually arrived in Medina, we disclosed the matter to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, he said:

'Then, return. We will keep the promise you made for you and seek the aid of Allah against them!' That was the reason I was not present at Badr." (Muslim, Jihad, 98). This incident is again a brilliant testimony to the magnanimous trustworthiness of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that extended even to his enemies.

There were also women who wanted to take part in the Battle of Badr. One of them was Umm Waraqa, who had rushed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and pleaded:

"Please, Messenger of Allah, allow me to join…I will treat the wounded and the ill, and Allah willing, I might even be given martyrdom!"

"Better you go and recite some Quran at your home", the Blessed Prophet advised her instead, "and Allah will surely grant you martyrdom."

Following this conversation, Umm Waraqa came to be called '*Shaheedah*' (martyr) among the Companions. Bursting with an insatiable thirst for martyrdom, later on, when Omar ﷺ was caliph, she was choked to death with a velvet blanket by her servants. Upon being informed, Omar ﷺ remarked, "Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth", immediately after which those responsible were caught and punished accordingly. (Abu Dawud, Salat, 61/591; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, IV, 505)

After being made aware that the Believers were headed towards Badr, Abu Sufyan, without delay, changed the direction of the caravan towards the coast, leaving Badr to his left.[363] Realizing he had saved the caravan, he then sent an envoy to the Quraysh Army, with the message:

"You had set out to protect your caravan, men and properties. But now that the danger has been repelled, you can return!"

Compliant with Abu Sufyan's message and with the advice of Ahnas ibn Sharik, the clans of Ibn Zuhra and Ibn Kaab returned. But Abu Jahl was adamant.

"We will not return until we make it to Badr", he bellowed. "We shall stay there for three days. We will slaughter camels and celebrate; the women will dance and sing. The Arabs around will hear us and fear us from here on end. Let's march!"

363. Ibn Hisham, II, 57.

When Abu Sufyan heard about the decision of the Meccans to march ahead regardless, he commented, "My sorry tribe…This must be Ibn Hisham's (Abu Jahl) idea! His unwillingness to return is due his zeal to become the leader of the people… it is transgression! And transgression is a bad omen!" (Waqidi, I, 43-45; Ibn Hisham, II, 258)

Intimately following the turn these developments were taking, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ now realized they were facing an inevitable life or death battle. Gathering the Companions, he asked:

"What do you think is more appropriate: following the caravan or meeting the Qurayhs Army?"

Speaking on behalf of the *Muhajirun*, Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ assured that they were ready to face up to the army of idolaters. The Noble Messenger ﷺ wished to hear the opinions of the *Ansar*, too; and that was when getting up on his feet, Miqdad ibn Aswad ﷺ made the following speech:

"Rest assured, Messenger of Allah, that we will never say what the Jews said to Musa ﷺ, 'You and Your Lord go and fight!' (al-Maida, 24). True to the word we gave you at Aqabah, we are ready at all times to fight the enemy on your right and left, in front of you or behind you, until the very end!"[364] (Bukhari, Maghazi, 4; Tafsir, 5/4)

Getting up after Miqdad ﷺ was Saad ibn Muadh ﷺ:

"Messenger of Allah…We have believed you and borne witness to the truth of the Quran you have delivered. Do as you wish! If you were to dive into the ocean, we would follow from behind you. Not a single *Ansari* would even hesitate!"

These words of loyalty and submission put a comforting smile on the magnificent expression of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, and after a brief prayer for their wellbeing, he declared:

"Then, let's march ahead with the blessings of Allah! Congratulations to you from now…for Allah has promised you one of two things, without specifying which one.[365] By Allah, it is as if I am seeing the exact spots where Quraysh will fall to their feet on the battlefield!" (Muslim, Jihad, 83; Waqidi, I, 48-49; Ibn Hisham, II, 253-254)

By the time the Muslim Army had arrived at Badr, Quraysh had already camped in Yalyal Valley, behind a sand hill, in the furthermost distant side to Medina. The

364. Ibn Masud ﷺ says, "I witnessed Miqdad utter words of such conviction that just to have uttered those words myself, I would be willing to forfeit saying all other words of worth…" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 4; Tafsir, 5/4)

365. One of the things promised in the 7th ayah of al-Anfal is Quraysh itself, that is, their defeat and ult - mate detainment into captivity, while the other is the great caravan of Quraysh coming from Damascus.

wells of Badr, on the other hand, stood on the side of the valley nearest to Medina.[366] When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ reached the well nearest to Badr, he discussed with the *Ansar* the most favorable spot for encampment. Hubab ibn Munzir ؓ made his feelings explicit:

"This is not an appropriate spot to camp, Messenger of Allah. We should instead camp by the well nearest to the Quraysh Army and then shut off the remainder of the wells behind us, except for that one. We could then set up a pool around that well to collect its water."

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ concurred.[367] (Ibn Hisham, II, 259-260; Ibn Sad, II, 15)

A group of idolaters including Hakim ibn Hizam came to get some water from the well the Believers had set up camp by. Though the Companions wished to prevent them from doing so, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ intervened, saying, "Leave them alone; let them drink from the well." Bar Hakim, all the others of the group ended up slain at the battlefield that day; and Hakim, in due course became a Muslim. Thereafter, whenever he wished to make an oath to reinforce the strength of his word, he would utter, "By Allah, who saved me from death at Badr and graced me with the blessings of *iman*…" (Ibn Hisham, II, 261)

By allowing the enemy to drink from the well, despite knowing that the same enemy would be looking to slaughter them only moments later, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ set a universal standard and a manner of extending guidance. Benevolent behavior of the kind has ended up softening many a heart of stone, subsequently opening a door therein to the guiding light of truth.

Once the Muslim Army encamped, Saad ibn Muadh ؓ said:

"Messenger of Allah…Let's put up a shade for you and keep your rides next to you. We will then go into battle with the enemy. If Allah grants us victory, then so be it. But in case He does not, you will then mount your horse and return to our brothers whom we have left behind. Prophet of Allah..! They love you as much as we do. If they knew you would end up fighting, in no way would they have remained behind! They, too, are bound to you from the bottom of their hearts and will fight by your side no matter what it takes!"

366. Ibn Hisham, II, 259.

367. According to the reports of locals, even though the other sand hills at Badr shift every five or ten years owing to persisting winds, the sand hill on which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ set up camp has remained stable to this day.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ praised Saad ﷺ and prayed for his wellbeing. Saad ﷺ then drew his sword from his scabbard and stood guard by the shade that was put up. (Ibn Hisham, II, 260; Waqidi, I, 49)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ, for the last time, sent Omar ﷺ to the Meccans, with the message, "Turn back…Fighting others is a lot more preferable to us!"

Hakim ibn Hizam was willing to take heed. "This is a considerate move; we better accept it", he said. "We will not be given consideration by anybody after this point!"

His words of good intent were stifled by the doggedness of Abu Jahl.

"I swear, we shall not return until we have taken our revenge; especially after Allah[368] has put us on the verge of it. We will teach them such a lesson that they will no longer be able to stalk our caravans and hold them back!" The words galvanized Quraysh to fight. (Waqidi, I, 61-65)

The idolaters sent Umayr ibn Wahb and the prominent cavalryman Abu Usama to inspect the Muslim Army. After circling the stationed Believers once, they returned, commenting, "We saw no sterile and brawny camels or horses…nor were there large number of men, nor a great preparation for that matter. But we saw such a unit, who wish that they would rather be killed than return to their families! They have neither a shelter to take refuge in, nor anything to defend themselves apart from their swords!" (Waqidi, I, 62)

Omar ﷺ recounts:

"On the night prior to the Battle, the Messenger of Allah showed, on by one, the very spots where the idolater notables would fall. By Allah who sent him as the true prophet, none of them were able to flee from the spots they were shown. They were thereafter thrown in a well, piled up on one another." (Muslim, Jannat, 76, Jihad, 83)

The surface where the Believers had encamped at Badr was sandy, making it difficult to walk. The declining amount of water had also meant they were facing shortage. It was becoming difficult finding enough water even for *wudu*. These constraints, added by the glaring superiority of the idolaters in terms of strength and number, gave Shaytan sufficient excuses to try and cast fear into Muslim hearts.

368. Arabs during the Age of Ignorance accepted the existence of Allah, glory unto Him; yet worshipping other deities beside Him, they had deviated from the path of *tawhid* into *shirk*. It was thus habitual for them, as seen in this case in point, to mention Allah's name and articulate His Divineness. Culpable for their falling into *shirk* were their worshipping of idols, motivated with the desire to attain closeness to Allah by using them as supposed intercessors and the belief that honor was to be gained by doing so. (see, al-AnKaabut, 61; az-Zumar, 3)

But that night it pelted down rain, enough to flood the valley. The Believers stored up the water and used it abundantly to take care of both their own needs and those of their animals. The rain, at the same time, had washed away the dust and settled the surface, making it firmer. It had forced the Meccans, on the other hand, to a standstill; they could not move about from their encampments. Allah, glory unto Him, moreover granted the Believers a soothing state of sleepiness,[369] all of which is recounted in the *ayah*:

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهِ
وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ.

"When He made the slumber fall upon you as a reassurance from him and sent down water from the sky upon you, that thereby He might purify you, and remove from you the fear of Satan, and make strong your hearts and firm (your) feet thereby." (al-Anfal, 11)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ offered salat all throughout the night and prayed Allah, glory unto Him, as confirmed by Ali ﷺ:

"I remember all too clearly that on the night of Badr all of us except for the Messenger of Allah slept. Until morning, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ offered salat and wept." (Ibn Huzayma, II, 52)

At dawn, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called out, "to salat, servants of Allah". Leading the fajr salat, he then urged the Believers for *jihad*. (Ahmad, I, 117)

Prior to the idolaters assuming their positions against the Believers, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, with an arrow in his hand, straightened out the Muslim ranks, making each Believer get in a straight line, subsequent to which he counted them. At that point, he slightly poked the belly of Sawad ibn Ghaziyaa, who had momentarily stepped out of line, telling him to step back in.

"You hurt me, Messenger of Allah", said Sawad. "Allah has sent you with the Truth. So I want to get even, as is my right!"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, without further ado, lifted his shirt and exposed his abdomen. "But he is the Messenger of Allah, Sawad," the Companions were saying in an attempt to dissuade him. But Sawad was adamant.

"No person is superior to another when it comes to justice", he replied. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him to settle the scores. That was when Sawad stretched out and kissed the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ abdomen.

369. Tabari, *Tafsir,* IX, 256-261.

"Why did you do that, Sawad?" asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

"You see, Messenger of Allah, we are on the brink of going into battle. So I wanted my last moment to be a moment with you!" The Noble Prophet ﷺ then prayed for his wellbeing. (Ibn Hisham, II, 266-267; Ibn Sad, II, 15-16)

The two forces lined up against one another on the plain of Badr, on 17th of Ramadan. It was a very hot day. Arabs, until then, used to fight out of reasons tribal, motivated by protecting their kindred. Tribalism was now replaced by religion; religious spirit had dispensed with the strong solidarity of kindred of yesterday, such that fathers found themselves raising their swords against their own sons, uncles against nephews and brothers against each other. That day, Abu Bakr ﷺ locked swords with his own son, Abu Ubaydah ibn Jarrah ﷺ with his father and Hamza ﷺ with his brother. It was an incredible scene.

Allah, glory unto Him, proclaims:

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِى فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِّثْلَيْهِمْ رَأْىَ الْعَيْنِ وَاللهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِى ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُوْلِى الْأَبْصَارِ.

"Indeed there was a sign for you in the two hosts (which) met together in encounter; one party fighting in the way of Allah and the other unbelieving, whom they saw twice as many as themselves with the sight of the eye and Allah strengthens with His aid whom He pleases; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight." (Al'i Imran, 13)

Having arrived at the battlefield full of arrogance, the idolaters were lost in their own conceit as they considered themselves invincible. Their conditions are depicted in the Quran as follows:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَاللهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ. وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ قَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّى جَارٌ لَّكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَتِ الْفِئَتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّى بَرِىءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّى أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّى أَخَافُ اللهَ وَاللهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ.

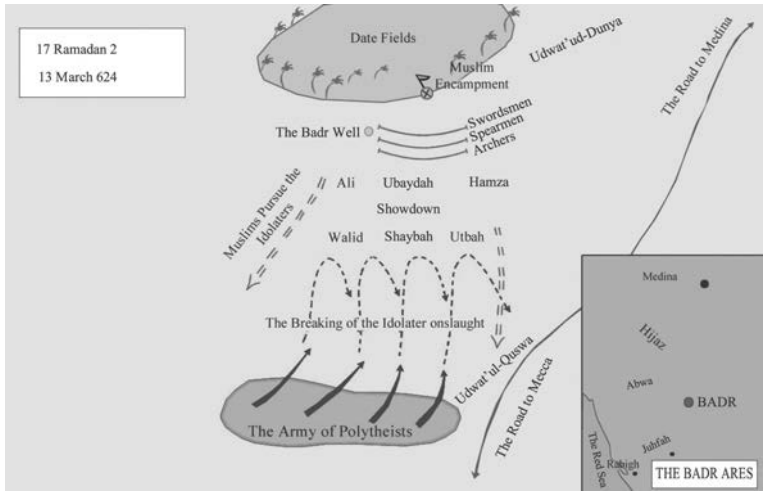
"Be not as those who came forth from their dwellings boastfully and to be seen of men, and debar (men) from the way of Allah, while Allah is surrounding all they do. And when Shaytan made their deeds seem fair to them and said: No-one of man-

kind can conquer you this day, for I am your protector. But when the armies came in sight of one another, he took flight, saying: I am guiltless of you; I see that which ye see not; I fear Allah. And Allah is severe in punishment." (al-Anfal, 47-48)

Their conceit was, however, overturned, dashed against the rock of Divine Pride:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ

"Those who disbelieve spend their wealth in order that they may debar (men) from the way of Allah. They will spend it, then it will become an anguish for them, then they will be conquered. And those who disbelieve will be gathered unto hell." (al-Anfal, 36)



The Aid of the Angels

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ threw his glance towards the idolaters; they were around a thousand in number. His Companions, on the other hand, were three-hundred and thirteen.[370] Turning to the direction of Kaabah, he at once lifted his hands aloft and began pleading his Lord in the following:

370. Bara ؓ later said, "We used to tell each other that the number of the Believers at Badr was exactly the same as the number of those in Talut's army to pass the river; that is three-hundred and thirteen." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 6; Tirmidhi, Siyar, 38/1598)

"Allah…Fulfill the promise You made me! Grant me victory! My Lord…If You annihilate this community of Islam today, none will remain on Earth from now on to worship You!"

So fervently did the Blessed Prophet ﷺ continue pleading with his hands lifted up towards the skies that his *rida* (frock) fell off from his shoulders. Seeing this, Abu Bakr ﷺ came next to him and putting his *rida* back over his shoulders, said:

"Messenger of Allah…You have pleaded your Lord as much as necessary. Allah will surely fulfill His promise to you!"

The hearts of all Believers, too, were in a rapturous state of pleading; and it was not long after that they were complemented with the grace of *Rahman*:

اِذْ تَسْتَغيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ اَنّى مُمِدُّكُمْ بِاَلْفٍ
مِنَ الْمَلٰئِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ. وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بُشْرٰى وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ
وَمَا النَّصْرُ اِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ.

"Remember ye implored the assistance of your Lord, and He answered you: "I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks. Allah made it but a message of hope, and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no help except from Allah: and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise." (al-Anfal, 9-10)

وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ.
إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمِدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ
الْمَلٰئِكَةِ مُنْزَلِينَ. بَلَى إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْرِهِمْ
هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلٰئِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ.

"Allah had helped you at Badr, when you were a contemptible little force; then fear Allah; thus May ye show your gratitude. Remember thou saidst to the Faithful: "Is it not enough for you that Allah should help you with three thousand angels (Specially) sent down? Yea, - if ye remain firm, and act aright, even if the enemy should rush here on you in hot haste, your Lord would help you with five thousand angels Making a terrific onslaught." (Al'i Imran, 123-125)

Allah, glory unto Him, aided the Believers that day with angels;[371] and compliant with their sincerity, increased their number to a thousand, three-thousand and ultimately five-thousand.

Even though the Noble Messenger ﷺ had foretold the exact spots where each and every idolater would end up being slain and knew from beforehand, through Divine Grace, that he would be granted victory, he still pleaded the Almighty until the break of dawn, ardently praying to the point of almost laying waste to himself. This state is one of the most vital manifestations of servanthood. Allah, glory unto Him, expects nothing from us, apart from servanthood. There is no firmer way of gaining closeness to Allah, glory unto Him, than pleaing Him, humbly and beseechingly.

On the day of Badr, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was heard to have remarked:

"There is Jibril! He has seized his horse's mane, equipped with his battle gear (and has come to your aid)!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 11)

Huwaytib ibn Abduluzza confesses:

"I was with the idolaters on the day of Badr and I saw many amazing scenes and, above all, the angels. They were killing the men of Quraysh, between the skies and earth, and taking them prisoners. There and then I said to myself, 'This man must be under the protection of Allah'. But for a long time, I did not tell anyone about what I saw." (Hakim, III, 562/6084)

Recounting below is Abu Dawud al-Mazini:

"I pursued an idolater on the day of Badr to strike and kill him. Before my sword even made contact with him, I saw his head tumble down on the ground. I realized somebody else, an angel, had struck him!" (Ahmad, V, 450)

According to the report of Anas ﷺ, once the idolaters began approaching, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said:

"Rise in preparation to enter Paradise whose breadth is as great as the distance between the skies and earth!" Umayr ibn Humam ﷺ, from the *Ansar*, said:

"…Paradise whose breadth is as great as the distance between the skies and earth, Messenger of Allah?"

"Yes", replied the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ.

"How wonderful", then remarked Umayr.

371. Bukhari, Maghazi, 4, 6; Muslim, Jihad, 58.

"What makes you say that?" then inquired the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

"By Allah", said Umayr, "I only said it out of my desire to be among the dwellers of Paradise; nothing else!"

"Most definitely, you are one of them", then assured the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Briefly after the Prophet's ﷺ words, Umayr took a few pieces of dates from out of his bag and began eating them. Almost immediately, however, he remarked:

"If I live long enough to finish these dates, then that would surely be a long life"; and flinging the dates aside, he paced towards the battlefield. He fought gallantly until he was ultimately martyred. (Muslim, Imara, 145; Ahmad, III, 137)

The Battle of Badr began with a *mubaraza*, a one-on-one showdown. The three warriors nominated from the Muslim ranks, Hamza, Ali and Ubayda ﷺ made light work of their enemies. Ubayda ﷺ, however, returned with a fatal leg wound, becoming a martyr soon after hearing the soothing words of the Prophet ﷺ :

"You have made it!" (Waqidi, I, 69-70)

Thereafter, the forces moved closer towards one another. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not allow the Believers to launch an offensive straight away, for there were many among Quraysh who were tentative to fight, knowing that the caravan was no longer threatened; and since the Muslims were taking their time to strike, their hesitation was increasing all the more, undermining the overall resolve of the Meccans. Besides, the slaying of the three warriors they had sent to meet the three Muslim challengers had sent shivers down their spines. Their silent moments of unease were broken, however, by the vile shriek of Abu Jahl:

"Do not be fooled by the death of a couple of people…March ahead!" (Waqidi, I, 71)

Spurred, the idolaters thereupon launched an all-out offensive. The genuine pleas coming from the Muslim ranks and the thunderous shouts of *Allah'u Akbar* sending fear into idolater ranks were ceaseless, inciting hearts filled with *iman* into states of ecstasy.

The moment finally came and the Blessed Prophet ﷺ commanded the Believers to launch an offensive. The two sides locked swords. It began fiercely; and its ferocity only increased by the moment.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was running to and fro in Muslim ranks, seeking the aid of the Almighty and, to spur on the Companions, was constantly reciting:

"Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn (their) backs." (al-Qamar, 45), proclaiming at the same time:

"Whoever patiently keeps his ground against the enemy and falls martyr, he will surely be placed in Paradise by the Almighty. The Paradise of *Firdaws* is awaiting those who fall martyr today. Make a move and attack!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 267-268)

Then turning to Abu Bakr ﷺ, who was by his side, he said:

"Glad tidings…! Jibril and the angels have come to our aid!"

At one stage, he grabbed small pebbles from the ground and threw it towards the idolaters, saying "may their faces blacken".[372] Right at that moment, a fierce wind began to blow towards the enemy, whirling up so much dust that they could hardly catch sight of each other.

The Lions of Badr

Ali ﷺ has stated:

"On the day of Badr, we were taking refuge in the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. He stood closest to the enemy, and was by far, the bravest and most persistent of all men." (Ahmad, I, 86)

Regarding the courage of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, Bara ﷺ affords a similar view:

"By Allah, whenever the battle would get fierce, we would seek refuge in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The next most courageous person in our eyes was him who was brave enough to stand in the same line as him." (Muslim, Jihad, 79)

The Companions showed great heroism and sacrifice throughout the Battle. The dauntless Hamza ﷺ, 'the Lion of Allah', in particular, displayed a brilliant example of courage. Umayya ibn Khalaf later on asked Companion Abdurrahman ibn Awf of the identity "…of the man who wore an ostrich wing on his chest as a mark during the battle."

"He was Hamza", replied Abdurrahman; "Hamza ibn Abdulmuttalib".

"Whatever it was that happened to us that day", then remarked Umayya, "it was because of him." (Ibn Hisham, II, 272)

In the footsteps of his uncle Hamza ﷺ, Ali ﷺ, too, showed great valor, knocking out one idolater after another.[373]

372. Ibn Hisham, II, 267.
373. Ibn Athir, *Usd'ul-Ghabah,* IV, 97.

Repeating verses of *rajaz*[374] on horseback, Abu Jahl was claiming to be impervious to any attempt of taking revenge from him, in any battle, arrogantly boasting, "I was born for days like this!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 275)

Abdurrahman ibn Awf ﷺ recounts:

"On the day of Badr, I looked to my right, then left, and saw that I was amid two *Ansari* youngsters, when in fact I would have preferred to be between stronger men. One of them, without making it audible to the other, asked me if I knew Abu Jahl.

'Yes, I do" I replied. 'What about him?'

'From what I heard, he apparently used speak ill of the Messenger of Allah! By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my life resides, if I see him, I will not part ways with him until one of us is killed!'

I was stunned by his words. The other youngster then spoke in a similar manner. I suddenly felt enormous satisfaction to be shoulder to shoulder with these youngsters. After the battle got under way, I spotted Abu Jahl, circling the battlefield on horseback. I turned to the youngsters and said, 'There he is…The man you are after!'

Hearing me, they drew their swords and ran towards Abu Jahl. After a brief scuffle, Abu Jahl ended up slain. The youngsters, as I later found out, were Muadh ibn Afra and Muadh ibn Amr." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 10; Muslim, Jihad, 42)

Muadh ibn Amr ﷺ retells the incident:

"As I thrusted my sword into Abu Jahl and gave him a fatal blow, his son Iqrimah struck me, all but severing my hand. It was left hanging merely on a skin! For the entire day, I continued fighting with my hand dangling behind me but it made it really difficult for me to fight. Once it got too uncomfortable, I stepped on it with my own foot, and severing completely, threw it aside!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 275-276)

In the aftermath, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ wondered about the whereabouts of Abu Jahl and sent Abdullah ibn Masud ﷺ to look for him. He found Abu Jahl lying on the ground. The conversation that followed is retold by Abdullah ibn Masud ﷺ himself:

374. *Rajaz* is a name given to a *bahir* in Arabic prosody. Literally, it means to 'quiver', and its rhythm resembles a *rajza*, or a she-camel –hence the name-, which, from being overly delicate, quivers when rising. *Rajaz* also means to 'roar', in which the case the name could have been derived from the roar-like singing of battle anthems, for which *rajaz* has been preferred. (Cehande, A.-Çetin, N. *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İslam Ansiklopedisi,* "recez" entry, IX, 657) The rhythmic and accented meeting therein of a slow and fast tempo enables it to be performed by a host of different instruments, evoking thereby the rallying of a variety of feelings. Making possible the expression of both joy and sorrow, *rajaz* is moreover said to contain around fifteen sub branches. (Tahir'ul-Mevlevi, *Edebiyat Lügati,* p. 120, "recez" article.)

'Enemy of Allah…Allah has surely disgraced you and put you to shame, hasn't He?' I asked him as he lay in front of me.

'Disgraced me and put me to shame…with what? Show me another person superior to me from among all the men your people have killed today!' he replied, having lost nothing of his arrogance. Then making reference to the fact I had my foot placed on his chest, remarked, 'You have reached a tough peak to climb, shepherd!' After a brief pause, he asked, 'Anyway, tell me…Who won today?'

'Allah and His Messenger…!' I said. Then, without further ado, I put him out of his misery with his own sword. Afterward, I made my way back to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and told him I had killed Abu Jahl. He thanked and praised Allah, glory unto Him, and said:

'He was the Pharaoh of this *ummah*!' (Bukhari, Maghazi, 12; Ahmad, I, 444; Ibn Hisham, II, 277; Waqidi, I, 89-90)

Ummu Haritha's son was martyred at Badr with a random, stray arrow flung from the enemy ranks. She came to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and said:

"If my son Haritha is in Paradise, Messenger of Allah, I will keep patient and anticipate its reward; but if not, I will cry my eyes out for him!"

She was, however, consoled by the wonderful words of the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

"There are many ranks in Paradise, Ummu Haritha; and your son has attained the highest of them, *Firdaws'ul-A'la*." (Bukhari, Jihad, 14; Ahmad, III, 272)

As she was returning, Ummu Haritha had a radiant smile on her face, as she was saying to herself:

"Just look at what Haritha has been given!" (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghaba, I, 426)

Since it was a cut throat battle of do or die for the survival of Islam, the fortunate Companions who took part in the first major battle that was of Badr are, at the same time, privileged with the honor of being the most virtuous of all Muslims. Likewise, the angels mobilized by the Almighty for this battle, who took part in that inimitable wave of *iman* inspired enthusiasm, have attained an honor superior to other angels, as attested by the conversation between Jibril عليه السلام and the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

When asked by Jibril عليه السلام how he regarded those who took part in Badr, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ responded by saying, "We regard them as the most virtuous of all Muslims!" To this Jibril عليه السلام replied by saying something similar:

"We, too, consider the angels to have taken part in Badr as the best among all angels!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 11)

The battle ended towards noon with a decisive Muslim victory. All up, fourteen Muslims were martyred, in contrast to which seventy idolaters, including Abu Jahl, had met their doom on the field. As courageous as they were in showing face at the field of Badr, the hapless idolaters nonetheless ended up drinking not the wine of victory as they had desperately hoped, but the venom of a miserable death. Instead of singing, their slave-girls mourned their deceased. Far from filling their appetites with the spoils they dreamt of seizing prior to a victory that was never to be, the idolaters instead ended up filling the pits of Hellfire.

Donned in his armor, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ made his way out of the shade, reciting:

سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ.

"Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn (their) backs." (al-Qamar, 45), regarding which Omar ﷺ said:

"When that *ayah* was revealed –and it was revealed in Mecca-, I wondered which hosts would end up being routed and defeated. But come the day of Badr, when I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recite it, I realized it was Quraysh who were the group prefigured to suffer a routing. For me, the meaning of the *ayah* transpired that day." (Ibn Sad, II, 25; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 312)

In providing commentary for the *ayah*:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُواْ نِعْمَةَ اللهِ كُفْرًا وَأَحَلُّواْ قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ

"Have you not seen those who have changed Allah's favor for ungratefulness and made their people to alight into the abode of ruin?" (Ibrahim, 28), Ibn Abbas ﷺ has stated:

"By Allah, the reference there is to the idolaters of Quraysh. The grace returned with unthankfulness is no other than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The abode of ruin to which they steered their people is the fire to which they dragged their people at Badr." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 8; Tafsir, 14/3)

The Battle of Badr, culminating in the triumph of Islam and *iman*, is replete with great instances bearing out how Allah, glory unto Him, aids His genuinely pious and sincere servants.

Following the massive victory, to prevent the Believers from getting carried away in a state of self-importance (*ujub*), Allah, glory unto Him, revealed the following:

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ رَمَى وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ.

"So you did not slay them, but it was Allah Who slew them, and you did not smite when you smote (the enemy), but it was Allah Who smote, and that He might confer upon the believers a good gift from Himself; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing." (al-Anfal, 17)

The power exercised by man is strictly within Divine Power (*taqdir*), owing to which it has been declared that 'no-one has power apart from the Glorious and Exalted Allah'. What existent beings possess -beings which although did not exist in past-eternity have come to being solely through the grace and benevolence of Allah, glory unto Him- is from the Almighty. Thus the Universal Will of Allah, glory unto Him, encompasses and comprises all creation and occurrences. This means that the origin of will and power is in the Almighty. Yet because human beings have been sent into this world as part of a test, they have been endowed with a particular will and an aptitude for good and evil. Actualizing this aptitude through practice has been left to their will.

The Return from Badr

Remaining in close vicinity to the battlefield for a further three days after a given victory was something practiced by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Once three days had elapsed, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ordered for his camel to be brought. The camel was geared up. The Noble Prophet ﷺ then began walking on foot. The Companions followed, supposing, 'the Messenger of Allah ﷺ must have remembered something'. He ultimately stopped by the desiccated well in which the idolaters had been thrown; and called out to each of them by their names:

"Abu Jahl! Umayya ibn Khalaf! Utbah ibn Rabia! Shaybah ibn Rabia!" He then continued:

"Wouldn't it have been better for you to obey Allah and His Messenger? We have found the promise of our Lord realized…and have you found the promise of your Lord realized?"

"Are you speaking to lifeless corpses, Messenger of Allah?" then asked Omar ﷺ. "How will they hear you and respond when they have been reduced to mere carcasses?"

"By Allah, in whose Hand of Might Muhammad's life resides, they can hear me better than you…only they cannot respond!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 8; Muslim, Jannat, 77)

When the battle came to an end, Jibril ﷺ came next to the Prophet of Allah, and said, "Allah the Almighty has sent me to you, Muhammad, and commanded me not to leave you until you are fully satisfied of our aid. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, I am", assured the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, upon which Jibril ﷺ departed. (Waqidi, I, 113; Ibn Sad, II, 26-27)

Breathing into Medina a breeze of joy, the enormous victory at Badr alternately sent Mecca into mourning; such that Abu Lahab died from unbearable grief.[375] The Divine promise was thus fulfilled.

The joy of the Believers was short-lived, however, due to the passing away of Ruqayya ﷺ, the honorable daughter of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, soon after the battle.

The Treatment of the Captives

Upon his return to Medina following a three day stay at Badr, the Noble Messenger ﷺ discussed, with the Companions, and above all with Abu Bakr, Omar and Ali ﷺ, what the most appropriate approach of dealing with the captives would be. Abu Bakr ﷺ was the first to share his opinion.

"These are our relatives and our kin, Messenger of Allah. So I suggest we should exact ransom of them and set them free. What we receive from them will be a means of adding strength to us in our struggle against the nonbelievers. And, Allah willing, they too will perhaps be guided and wind up assisting us."

"What is your opinion, son of Khattab?" the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then asked Omar ﷺ.

"No way, Messenger of Allah…I am in no way of the same opinion as Abu Bakr. Allow us to sever their heads. Allow me and I will personally finish off so and so from among my relatives. Allow Ali to finish off his brother Aqil and allow Hamza to finish off his brother Abbas…until Allah brings it entirely into light that there is not a trace of weakness and vulnerability in our hearts for the idolaters! These captives are the leaders of idolatry and oppression!"

As he carried the hope that they would eventually be guided and anticipated the issuing forth, through them, of generations who would worship Allah only, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ inclined towards the opinion of Abu Bakr ﷺ. (Muslim, Jihad, 58; Tirmidhi, Siyar, 18/1567; Ahmad, I, 30-31, 383-384; Waqidi, I, 107; Ibn Saad, II, 22)

Consequent upon these discussions, the captives were set free in return for a certain amount of ransom. Those unable to pay were let go regardless, free of charge. But each of those, among them, who could read and write were made to pass on

375. Ibn Hisham, II, 289.

their knowledge to ten kids in Medina. Only then were they to be considered as having imbursed their ransom. Zayd ibn Thabit, the future scribe of the Quran who later was to end up being entrusted with the task of gathering the Quran, was among the children who learnt how to read and write from the captives. (Ahmad, I, 247; Waqidi, I, 129; Ibn Sad, II, 22)

Allah, glory unto Him, declared, with regard to the captives and the ransom exacted from them:

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى حَتَّى يُثْخِنَ فِى الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللّٰهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ. لَّوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ. فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

"It is not for any prophet to have captives until he has thoroughly subdued (the enemy) in the land. Ye desire the lure of this world and Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter, and Allah is Mighty, Wise. Had it not been for an ordinance of Allah which had gone before, an awful doom had come upon you on account of what you took. Now enjoy what you have won, as lawful and good, and keep your duty to Allah. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (al-Anfal, 67-69)

Omar ﷺ recounts:

"When I went next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the morning, I found him sitting with Abu Bakr. They were both shedding tears. 'What makes you and your friend cry, Messenger of Allah?' I asked him. 'Tell me, so I can either join you, if I am able to identify with what it is you're crying over. If not, I can at least try to join you!'

'What am I to do know over the ransom these friends of yours received from these captives? I was shown that the punishment awaiting them is closer than that tree over there', said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. (Ahmad, I, 31; Muslim, Jihad, 58)

Allah, glory unto Him, was not pleased with the detaining and releasing of captives in return for ransom, given the enemy had not yet been decisively dealt with, and Islam had not yet attained the might it was destined for and before *fitnah* (mischief) had entirely been wiped out. He therefore issued a warning against the Believers. Accepting ransom carries the furthermore baggage of worldly desire, whereas the Almighty was willing the Muslims to take into consideration

the Hereafter. Taking captives from the enemies of Truth before they had been overwhelmed could have jeopardized the happiness of Muslims.

As there is no accrued liability in an error of legal opinion (*ijtihad*), coupled with the guarantee that the participants of the Battle Badr would not be subject to Divine punishment, reinforced all the more with the fact that there is no punishment for a deed that has not explicitly been prohibited from beforehand, the Almighty pardoned the Believers and declared permissible the ransom they had seized.

Allah, glory unto Him, has ordered that captives and slaves be treated with honor and kindness.[376] The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ has also many *ahadith* in regard. Indeed, his last words before his passing away, reportedly, were:

"Be attentive to salat and salat especially…And fear Allah for those under your care." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 123-124/5156; Ibn Maja, Wasaya, 1)

Marur ibn Suwayd explains:

"I once saw Abu Dharr ﷺ wearing precious clothes. His servant was also wearing the same clothes. I asked Abu Dharr of the reason. In reply, he told me that in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ he had once cursed someone regarding the person's mother and he was in turn admonished by the Prophet of Allah, who said, 'It seems you still carry traces of the customs of Ignorance. They are your servants and at the same time your brothers. Allah has entrusted them in your care. Given you have a brother under your care, feed him what you feed yourself and clothe him in what you clothe yourself. Do not burden him with more than he can handle; and if you do, help him!" (Bukhari, Itq, 15; Muslim, Ayman, 40)

An evocative testimony is offered by Abu Aziz, brother of Musab ibn Umayr ﷺ:

"I too had fallen prisoner in the aftermath of the Battle of Badr and was handed to a group of *Ansar*. The Prophet's ﷺ command to treat the prisoners well was made known to everyone but the pains taken by the *Ansar* was something out of the ordinary. Day and night, they would give their share of bread to me, making do themselves with mere dates. Embarrassed, I would hand the bread back to one of them, only to have it returned to me, without anyone of them laying a hand on it." (Haythami, VI, 86; Ibn Hisham, II, 288)

Such magnanimity by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his Companions, at a time when oppression and injustice ran rife, provides an exemplary pattern for entire mankind until the Final Hour. Approaching people with supreme and genuine

376. See, an-Nisâ, 36.

goodness, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ would simply let his overall conduct (*hal*) do the talking in calling them to the path of Truth; and only after warming their hearts, would he begin to verbally explain Islam. Moved by a compassionate approach of the kind, many of the Badr captives in fact ended up accepting Islam.

Not only does Islam not advocate the institution of slavery[377], it also does not promote it. That said, Islam saw the practice as an entrenched social reality; and considering its sudden abolishment would cause mayhem in the social balance, it did not entirely overrule it all at once. But to prevent possible abuse and exploitation, it did regulate slavery, by virtue of binding it to certain principles, thereby perfecting the law of slavery, as best as could be.

Since war is an existing actuality among nations that seemingly will not subside until the Final Hour, the need for laws protecting those who have lost their freedom as a consequence of it will always remain. Therefore, instead of abolishing it, which would have entirely overlooked the aforementioned matter of fact, Islam considered greater benefit in instating protective principles and regulating the law of slavery.

Through the principles it implements, Islam brings the slave and the master closer to each other, seeking, at the same time, the freeing of the former. In a case where a person accidentally kills another, for instance, Islam then necessitates, as compensation, first the freeing of a slave and then the payment of blood-money, valued in silver or camels, of an amount negotiated with the victim's family. Atoning for an error made during *hajj* likewise calls for, first of all, the freeing of a slave; and the same goes for failing to keep an oath, committing *zihar*[378] and even breaking the fast of Ramadan. In praise of the greatness of certain deeds, it is not uncommon to see them compared to 'freeing such and such amount of slaves', which places accent on the virtue in paving the way for the freedom of others. On the other side of the coin, unlawful enslavement of another is regarded as one of the greatest sins. It emphatically commands to treat in the nicest manner those who were previously enslaved for one reason or another.

Islam always counsels the master to feed the slave from what he would see fit to feed himself, to clothe him in the same manner, not to burden him with surplus work while he is fasting and see to his needs. Freeing a slave is always considered a better avenue of salvation for a Believer. Islam introduces such rights for slaves that a strict abidance by them suggests that it is much more preferable to stay away from purchasing slaves, for it is no different than becoming enslaved.

377. Captivity and slavery are here evaluated together, for no other reason, than that the source of slavery is captivity; slaves are those who have fallen prisoner at war.

378. *Zihar* is the then prevalent practice among Arab men of resembling their wives to their mothers and thereby considering it no longer proper to continue marital relations with them. Islam prohibited this practice, holding accountable those who do so with compensation (*kaffarah*).

Islam hence shut the doors on slavery as much as was allowed by the circumstances, fully opening, in contrast, its doors of exit, promoting at every given opportunity the freeing of the enslaved.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ suggested to his uncle Abbas, among the captives of Badr:

"You are a wealthy man, uncle. Pay ransom for yourself, your nephew Aqil, Nawfal ibn Harith and also for your ally Utbah ibn Amr."

"I am a Muslim, Messenger of Allah", replied Abbas. "Quraysh made me come by force!"

"Only Allah knows the insight to that. If what you said is true, then Allah will surely reward you for it. But as far as appearances go, you took up arms against us and therefore you must pay your ransom", stated the Blessed Prophet ﷺ after which he seized the 800 dirhams of gold Abbas had with him, as part of the spoils of the battle.

"At least, count that as ransom, Messenger of Allah", pleaded Abbas.

"No", replied the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. "Those are the spoils Allah has granted us!"

"It seems you are adamant to force me into begging in my remaining days", then lamented Abbas.

"What about the gold you left with your wife Ummu'l-Fadl?" commented the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ.

"Which gold are you talking about?"

"I am talking about the gold you handed over to your wife Ummu'l-Fadl as you were leaving Mecca, telling her, at a place where nobody other than Allah could see or hear you, 'I do not know what will happen to me this time…if something should happen to me, then take this much of the gold for yourself, and give this much to Ubaydullah, this much to Fadl, this much to Qusam and this much to Abdullah'".

Astounded by these words, Abbas could but say:

"By Allah who has sent you as prophet, no other person apart from Ummu'l-Fadl and I knew about that. There is no doubt that you are the Messenger of Allah!" (Ahmad, I, 353; Ibn Sad, IV, 13-15)

Among the captives of Badr was also Abu'l-As ibn Rabi, the husband of Zaynab ﵂ and the son-in-law of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Abu'l-As was a highly regarded

merchant in Mecca. His mother Hala bint Khuwaylid was the sister of the honorable Khadijah, the Prophet's ﷺ wife, for whom Abu'l-As was more like a son than a nephew.

At the height of their enmity, the idolaters of Quraysh were inciting the Noble Messenger's ﷺ son-in-laws to, "…divorce Muhammad's daughters and send them back to him, so he has more to worry about!" Abu'l-As was the subject of similar provocations, with the idolaters promising him that they would have him married to whoever he wished if he did go ahead with the divorce. But Abu'l-As sternly rejected their offer, insisting he was going to remain by the side of his wife no matter what it took.

Once the Meccans began sending the required ransom to free their fellow tribesmen who had fallen captive at Badr, Zaynab ﵂, too, sent her necklace, given to her as present by her mother Khadijah ﵂ at her wedding. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was overcome with emotion the moment he saw the necklace. He said to the Companions:

"You might consider freeing Zaynab's captive and sending her ransom back to her, if you wish".

The Companions agreed unreservedly, freeing Abu'l-As at that instant and arranging for the necklace to be returned to its owner immediately.

Before letting him go, the Noble Messenger ﷺ made Abu'l-As promise him he would send Zaynab to Medina, a condition of his release that nonetheless was to remain a secret between the two. (Ibn Hisham, II, 296-297; Abu Dawud, Jihad, 121/2692; Ahmad, VI, 276)

Wahb ibn Umayr was also among the captives of Badr. His father Umayr was among the most sharp-witted of all the idolaters of Quraysh and was also among their bravest. Back in the days, he was the man behind many assaults on Muslims. Expressing, in the aftermath, his grief over the fate of their fellow idolaters thrown in the pits of Badr to Safwan ibn Umayr, with whom he was sitting near Hijr, Umayr had Safwan tell him, bemoaningly:

"There is no point on living after hearing what happened to them!"

"You are right at that", remarked Umayr. "If I had no debt and children for the wellbeing of whom I would fear should something happen to me, I would have surely gone and killed Muhammad. I even have an excuse to get them to allow me near. I will simply tell them that I have come for my captive son. Besides, from what I hear, he even walks the streets without fear!"

Safwan was happy just to hear these words.

"I will pay your debt. As for your children, I will take care of them as my own and tend for their wellbeing as long as I am alive", he assured Umayr.

A man of his word, Umayr then immediately had his sword sharpened and smeared with poison. Safwan aided his cause further by having a camel and food for the journey prepared for him.

It was not long after that Umayr arrived at Medina. Stopping at the door of the Masjid, he dismounted his camel and girded his sword. His sight made Omar ﷺ, who was the first to see him, furious, as he wondered to himself, "that is Umayr, the enemy of Allah…and by Allah, he could have only come with evil on his mind", before storming inside the Masjid, where he found the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"Umayr has come, Messenger of Allah, with a sword in hand!" he said.

"Send him to me", the Prophet of Allah ﷺ responded, calmly. So Omar ﷺ went back to Umayr. Seizing him by the strap of his sword, he dragged Umayr inside the Masjid, telling the *Ansari* Companions around him to "be on your toes to protect the Messenger of Allah from this wicked man, for he is not to be trusted!"

"Let him go, Omar!" the Blessed Prophet ﷺ called out, noticing the scuffle. "And you Umayr…come closer!" He then asked Umayr the reason why he had come.

"I have come for my captive son. And I expect you to be generous in his release!" Umayr explained.

"Then what is with the sword around your neck?" inquired the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"To hell with swords…! Of what benefit have they been to us until now?" Umayr replied astutely.

"Tell me truth", the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ however insisted. "Why have you come here?"

"For no other reason than for my son, who has fallen prisoner in your hands!"

"What was it that you said to Safwan at Hijr, then?"

"What is it that I could have said to him?" Umayr mumbled, astounded.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ then retold Umayr, word for word, his conversation with Safwan, adding, "Allah has come in between you and your plans and prevented you from what you had in mind of doing!"

Umayr then remarked, "I bear witness that you are most surely the messenger of Allah. We used to reject you regarding the revelation that came to you from the

heavens. Nobody other than Safwan and I knew about that. Only Allah could have informed you of it. Thank Allah who has brought me here and given me guidance!" He then professed his declaration of *iman*. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then told the Companions to:

"Thoroughly teach your brother Islam. Recite to him and teach him the Quran and release his prisoner!"

The Blessed Prophet's ﷺ orders were carried out immediately. Umayr had more to say.

"Messenger of Allah…I was a man who used to take no pains in trying to snuff out the light of Allah and not shrink back in exacting the most ruthless torment to the Believers. I can, if you wish, go to Mecca and invite the idolaters to Allah and His Messenger. Allah willing, it could be that they might just be guided!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ allowed him to go.

Without a clue as to how the events had unfolded, Safwan ibn Umayya was meanwhile telling the Meccan idolaters, "…you will be sent into ecstasy over the news you shall receive only within a few days; news that will make you forget the pain of Badr!"

Anxious, he was asking each and every caravan arriving at the town, of the news of Umayr's whereabouts. Someone, on horseback, eventually informed him of Umayr's acceptance of Islam.

Upon his return to Mecca, Umayr ibn Wahb ﷺ wasted no time in beginning to invite the idolaters to Islam. Idolater attempts of restraining him were without success. Many were guided through his call. Umayr ﷺ one day came across Safwan, near Kaabah, and said to him, "You are one of the most notables of Quraysh. Can't you still see that it is stones that we worship and dedicate sacrifices for? How could that be religion?" Safwan could not say a word back, reduced to an unbreakable silence. (Ibn Hisham, II, 306-309; Waqidi, I, 125-128; Ibn Sad, IV, 199-201)

The whole incident has since been celebrated as an epitome of the saying, "breathe life into he who has come to kill you."

The news that all the notables of Quraysh were slain at Badr and the sight of seventy other captives brought to Medina with their hands tied around their necks sent the idolaters, hypocrites and Jews in local Medina into despair. Lamenting that 'the tide of victory had now turned towards the Prophet', Abdullah ibn Ubayy and his crew had no other option than to pledge their allegiance to the Blessed Prophet and state their affinities to Islam.[379]

379. Bukhari, Tafsir, 3/15; Waqidi, I, 121.

The Verdict Regarding the Spoils

As a regulative principle regarding spoils had not yet been revealed, disagreements emerged over the distribution of the spoils seized at Badr. Amongst others that can be mentioned, Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ, whose brother was martyred at Badr, came to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ holding a sword in his hand he had seized from Said ibn As, who he killed during the battle, suggesting it should be given to him. Like incidents and requests brought about the revealing of the first *ayah* of al-Anfal, before the Believers had even left Badr and distributed the spoils:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلّٰهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ.

"They ask you (O Muhammad) of the spoils of war. Say: The spoils of war belong to Allah and the messenger, so keep your duty to Allah, and adjust the matter of your difference, and obey Allah and His messenger, if you are (true) believers." (al-Anfal, 1)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thus accordingly and in a just manner, apportioned the spoils to the fighters near Medina.[380]

Revealed afterward was an *ayah* which comprised more detailed rulings concerning spoils, the 41st *ayah* of the same *surah*:

"And know that whatever you take as spoils of war…A fifth thereof is for Allah, and for the messenger and for the kinsmen (who have need) and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and that which We revealed unto Our slave on the Day of Discrimination, the day when the two armies met. And Allah is Able to do all things." (al-Anfal, 41)

In accordance with the *ayah*, a fifth of the spoils of battle are for Allah, His Messenger, his kinsman, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer.

After seeing to the needs of his family members with the portion of spoils that fell to his lot, the Noble Prophet ﷺ deposited the remainder in the Treasury, to be spent to cover the needs of Muslims and army expenses.[381]

Amr ibn Abasa ﷺ narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah led us in salat with a camel, from among the spoils of battle, as *sutrah*[382], placed in the direction of *qibla*. After completing the salat, he

380. Ahmad, I, 178; V, 323-324; Abu Dawud, Jihad, 144-145/2737-2744.
381. Bukhari, Faraid, 3, Khumus, 1, Nafaqat, 3; Muslim, Jihad 49.
382. A *sutrah* is a curtain or anything that could be used as cover. Specifically, it refers to what is placed in

plucked a hair from the side of the camel, and holding it up in his hand, said, 'Not even this much of your spoils, apart from the fifth, is permissible for me to take. Besides, even the fifth is ultimately returned to you (spent for your needs).'" (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 149/2755)

Whatever he had, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would give to the needy among the Companions, despite the fact that many a time there would not be anything to cook in his own house, with the hearth remaining unlit for months on end. It is clear, from many similar narrations that he and his family would on most occasions be without a day's supply of food. His conduct in this regard is vividly displayed in the subsequent incident narrated by Anas ﷺ:

"Some goods from Bahrain were brought to the Messenger of Allah, who ordered them be temporarily dropped off inside the *Masjid*. Bay far, it was the most brought to the Messenger of Allah to date. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ went to offer salat did not turn his eye once towards the pile. After the salat, he came and stood by the pile and began giving it out to whoever he saw; he did not leave, until there was not even a dirham left that had not been given out." (Bukhari, Salat, 42; Jizya, 4, Jihad, 172)

Surah al-Anfal was revealed in the second year of Hegira. As much of it provides detail on the Battle of Badr, coupled by the fact it was revealed during the few days prior to and after the battle, it has also been called the *surah* of Badr.

Martyrdom

Martyrdom is the most ultimate and sublime rank in the world that a Believer could ever attain to. Even though the lowest rank of Paradise is better than the entire world, a martyr, owing to the sublimity of his rank and greatness of his reward in Paradise, will want to return to the world over and over again to be martyred each time. Allah, glory unto Him, states:

وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ.

"And if you are slain in the way of Allah or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allah and mercy is better than what they amass." (Al'i Imran, 157)

Recounting the incident below is Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ:

front of one performing salat for the purpose of preventing others from passing in front of him.

"Once a man came while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was leading us in salat. Upon taking his place in the row, he prayed, 'Allah…Give me the best of what you give your righteous servants!'

As soon the Prophet ﷺ finished his salat, he asked, 'Who was the man who made that prayer before?'

'It was me', said the man.

'Then your horse will be made to fall' said the Prophet of Allah, 'and you will be martyred in the way of Allah.'" (Hakim, I, 325/748)

Together with heralding the future martyrdom of many of his Companions, those on behalf of whom the Blessed Prophet ﷺ prayed for forgiveness and wellbeing, also ended up being martyred. One such example is Amr ibn Aqwa ؓ, who a short time after the blissful privilege of being on the receiving end of the Prophet's ﷺ prayer, was martyred at Khaybar.[383]

That the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ plea for forgiveness manifested itself in the martyring of those on behalf of whom the Prophet ﷺ prayed, is another proof to the greatness of the rank of martyrdom. Accustomed to witnessing this sequence in many others, in time, the Companions, too, came to conceive these prayers as the fortunate news of their upcoming martyring.

According to a narration by Abu Qatadah ؓ, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ once stood up amid the Companions, and reminded them that "Believing in Allah and fighting in His way are the most worthy of all deeds!"

Thereupon a man stood and asked, "If I were to die in the way of Allah, Messenger of Allah, would that atone for my sins?"

"Yes. If you persevere on the front, hold out against the enemy, patiently and anticipating the rewards from Allah only and, in the end, are killed in the way of Allah, it will atone for your sins. But your debts are excluded. And that Jibril told me." (Muslim, Imarah, 117; Tirmidhi, Jihad, 33/1712)

And in another *hadith*, it is declared:

"All the sins of a martyr, except his violation of the rights of others, are forgiven by Allah." (Muslim, Imarah, 119)

At another time, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ explained the following to the Companions:

"Last night in my dream I saw two men. They took me up this tree and then to a house, which was of a great beauty and worth I had never witnessed before. The

383. Muslim, Jihad, 123, 132; Bukhari, Maghazi, 138.

two men then said to me, 'This exceptional house is the palace of martyrs.'" (Bukhari, Jihad, 4; Janaiz, 93)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ would compassionately counsel and support the families of the martyrs and, at the same time, hearten the Companions to attain the rank of martyrdom.

Jabir ﷺ explains:

"My father's corpse, subjected to *muslah*[384], was brought and placed in front of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I made a move to uncover the shroud from his face but I was prevented by those around who thought the sight would disturb others. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then said, 'the angels are ceaselessly shading him under their wings.'" (Bukhari, Janaiz, 3, 35, Jihad, 20; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 129-130)

Being martyred in the way of Allah is not death. It rather marks the receiving of eternal blessings in a life of whose nature we are unaware. Allah, glory unto Him, therefore prohibits the use of the term 'dead' to refer to martyrs. The Quran pronounces:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِى سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ.

"And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah: "They are dead." Nay, they are living, though you perceive it not." (al-Baqara, 154)

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِى سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ.
فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ
مِّنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ
مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

"Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord. They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah: And with regard to those left behind, who have not yet joined them (in their bliss), the (Martyrs) glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve. They glory in the Grace and the bounty from Allah, and in the fact

384. *Muslah* is the act of mutilating the corpse of the deceased at battle in the form of severing the ears, nose and other bodily parts, and carving out the eyes. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was emphatic to prohibit this ruthless practice, even banning its practice on animals. (Bukhari, Mazalim, 30, Dhabaih, 25; Abu Dawud, Jihad, 110)

that Allah suffers not the reward of the Faithful to be lost (in the least)." (Al'i Imran, 169-171)

On the Day of Judgment, martyrs will be recognized by the blood flowing freely from their wounds, giving the impression they were seemingly opened just then, and the enchanting musk like fragrance emanating therefrom. Human beings will be made to stand witness to their honor and virtue. It is for that reason that unlike others, the corpse of a martyr is not given a wash before the funeral and the wound is left in tact as it is.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ elaborates the compassion Allah, glory unto Him, shows martyrs during the moment they breathe their last:

"The pain one feels when bitten by an ant is the most pain a martyr feels during death." (Tirmidhi, Fadail'ul-Jihad, 26/1668; Nasai, Jihad, 35; Ibn Majah, Jihad, 16)

In encouraging Believers to martyrdom, the Allah, glory unto Him, states:

فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ فَيُقْتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا.

"Let those fight in the cause of Allah Who sell the life of this world for the hereafter. To him who fights in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or gets victory, soon shall We give him a reward of great (value)." (an-Nisa, 74)

Expressing his sincere yearning to become martyred is also the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

"Were it not to be a burden upon my *ummah*, I would not remain behind from any campaign (*sariyya*) and would take part in all of them. I would have wanted to be martyred in the way of Allah, then be revived and be martyred once again, and then again." (Bukhari, Iman, 26; Muslim, Imarah, 103, 107)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ one day saw Omar ﷺ in a shirt.

"Is the shirt new or has it just been washed?" inquired the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"It is not new, Messenger of Allah; it has just been washed", Omar ﷺ replied.

"(May you) wear it new, live in gratitude and die a martyr!" (Ahmad, II, 89)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was thus effectively heralding martyrdom for Omar ﷺ.

On an other occasion the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ was standing on Mount Uhud, accompanied by Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman ﷺ, when suddenly the mountain began to quake. Stomping his feet on the ground, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then said:

"Calm down, Uhud. For standing on you are none other than a prophet, a *siddiq* and two martyrs." (Bukhari, Ashab'un-Nabi, 6; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 18/3703; Nasai, Ahbas, 4)

Omar ﷺ, too, used to constantly pray, "Allah; grant me martyrdom in your path and the joy of dying in the land of your Messenger!" (Bukhari, Fadail'ul-Medina, 12) Allah, glory unto Him, did indeed grant his burning wish. His daughter Hafsa ﷺ says:

"When I heard my father's prayer, I was taken aback and remarked, 'How will that be; you want to be martyred and in Medina, too?' But all he said was, 'If Allah wishes, He will make it happen.'"

The amazement of people, in relation, and their curiosity as to how it would take place remained, up until Omar ﷺ was eventually martyred. (Ibn'ul-Hajar, Fath'ul-Bari, IV, 101)

In pointing to the need for each Muslim to eagerly desire martyrdom, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ states:

"One, who wholeheartedly wishes martyrdom from Allah, will be the granted that rank, even if he dies in his bed." (Muslim, Imarah, 157; Nasai, Jihad, 36)

"A person who sincerely desires martyrdom will be given its reward, even if he does not end up being martyred." (Muslim, Imarah, 156)

Additionally, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ considered other types of death under martyrdom. He in fact once asked his Companions, "Who do you consider to be martyrs?"

"Whoever dies in the way of Allah, Messenger of Allah, is a martyr", they replied.

"In that case, the martyrs of my *ummah*", said the Blessed Prophet, "are very few."

"Then who is a martyr, Messenger of Allah?"

"One, who is killed in the way of Allah, dies in the way of Allah, dies from a contagious disease, from diarrhea and dies from drowning, is a martyr", explained the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. (Muslim, Imarah, 165; Ibn Majah, Jihad, 17)

In other narrations, the Noble Messenger ﷺ also designates those who die in self-defense or defending their families and properties as martyrs.[385]

385. See, Bukhari, Mazalim, 33; Muslim, Iman, 226; Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 28-29; Tirmidhı, Diyat, 21.

The Arrival of Zaynab ﵂ in Medina

Now granted release, the first thing Abu'l-As, the Prophet's son-in-law who had fallen captive at Badr, did as soon as he returned to Mecca was to allow Zaynab ﵂ to leave to Medina. Around a month after Badr, the Blessed Prophet sent Zayd ibn Haritha and another Companion from the *Ansar*, towards Mecca, telling them to, "wait at the Valley of Yajij until Zaynab comes there and accompany her until you all arrive in Medina".

Abu'l-As thus told Zaynab ﵂ she could go to Medina, to her father. She wasted no time preparing. Kinanah, Abu'l-As's brother, arranged for a camel with a *hawdaj*, in which she would travel. Flinging his bow and bag of arrows around his shoulder, Kinanah then grabbed the reins of the camel as they headed out of Mecca during the day.

The news spread fast among the idolaters, however, and a mob set out to turn her back, catching upto them near Zituwa. Out of nowhere, Habbar ibn Aswad struck the *hawdaj* in which Zaynab ﵂ was seated, causing her to fall on a rock nearby. Pregnant at the time, Zaynab ﵂ had a miscarriage there and then, as she lay bloodied and bruised. She was in enormous pain. In defense, Kinanah crouched and placed an arrow in his bow; and pointing it towards the idolaters, shouted:

"Do not take another step or I will shower you in arrows!"

After a moment's hesitation, the pursuers made tracks. But a while later, accompanied by another group of idolaters, Abu Sufyan arrived, telling Kinanah to put his bow and arrow aside, as they only wanted to have a word. After Kinanah laid down his bow and arrow, Abu Sufyan said:

"You made a wrong move by taking her out of Mecca in broad daylight, knowing all the trouble we have gone through and what we have been made to suffer because of Muhammad! By taking her daughter to him, blatantly, for all to see, you are only giving people reason to believe that it is a sign of our weakness and helplessness that you are able to take her out of town with such ease and that it is a consequence of our shameful defeat that you are doing so! I swear by my own life that we could not care less whether Zaynab is taken to her father or whether she remains here. Nor could such a thing provide us incentive to take revenge! Now listen to me…Take her back to Mecca. Once people quiten down and are convinced we were able to persuade to you to take her back, secretly take her out of Mecca, to her father!"

Kinanah did just that. After spending a few more nights in Mecca, waiting for things to quiten down, he set out once again with Zaynab ﵂, this time at night. He handed her over to Zayd ibn Haritha and his friend who had been waiting at Yajij

Valley, who then accompanied her to Medina, where she was eventually reunited with her father.[386]

In the sixth year of Hegira, heading a caravan of Quraysh, Abu'l-As was to once again fall captive. At dawn, he sent a message to Zaynab ﵂, pleading her to seek pardon from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ on his behalf. As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had just completed leading the *fajr* salat she stuck her head out of her chamber, and said:

"People…I am Zaynab, the Messenger of Allah's daughter; and I have taken Abu'l-As under my protection!"

"We take under our protection, too, the person you have taken under your protection!" the Blessed Prophet ﷺ responded.

"He is a relative, and besides, the father of my children; so that is why I took him under my protection", Zaynab later explained to her father. The Blessed Prophet, addressing the Companions, then said:

"If you deem it appropriate to return his property to him then do so, but if not, you have rights over it anyhow!"

The Companions agreed, with ease, to return the property to Abu'l-As. Having retrieved the goods, Abu'l-As returned to Mecca; and after giving each shareholder of the caravan his due, called out:

"Is there a person left whom I have not given his due?"

"No", replied those around.

"Have I fulfilled my duties to you?"

"For sure", they said. "May you be rewarded in plentitude for you are an honorable and loyal man!"

"By Allah", then Abu'l-As began to confess, "the only thing that held me back from accepting Islam in Medina was the fear that you might have been led to think that I only accepted Islam to seize your properties. But since that is done, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger!"

Abu'l-As then returned to Medina, where the Blessed Prophet had Zaynab and him remarry. (Waqidi, II, 553-554; Ibn Sad, VII, 32-33)

The Jews and the Battle of Banu Qaynuqa (Shawwal, 2/ April, 624)

Forming a significant community in and around Medina, the Jews used to constantly tell their Arab neighbors of the coming of a prophet in the offing. Their genuine belief that the prophet would hail from among their community meant they

386. Ibn Hisham, II, 297-299; Ibn Abdilbar, IV, 1854; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah,* III, 362-363.

did not shy away from eagerly spreading the news. Once the awaited prophet did in fact arrive, not from their own people, but from among the Arabs, their feelings of enthusiasm gave way to jealousy. Immediately changing their tune, their rejected his prophethood. Allah, glory unto Him, pronounces, in relation:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِى إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
وَذِى الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَوةَ
وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مِّعْرِضُونَ.

"And when We made a covenant with the children of Israel: You shall not serve any but Allah and (you shall do) good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy, and you shall speak to men good words and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate. Then you turned back except a few of you and (now too) you turn aside." (al-Baqara, 83)

بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْاْ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ بَغْيًا أَنْ
يُنَزِّلُ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَبَآؤُوا
بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ.

"Evil is that for which they have sold their souls- that they should deny what Allah has revealed, out of envy that Allah should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases; so they have made themselves deserving of wrath upon wrath, and there is a disgraceful punishment for the unbelievers." (al-Baqara, 90)

Another reason for Jewish bitterness was their love of the world, depicted in the Quran as follows:

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاةٍ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ.

"And you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for life (greedier) than even those who are idolaters; every one of them loves that he should be granted a life of a thousand years…" (al-Baqara, 96)

Moreover, their monopoly of commercial life gave the Jews an air of superiority, aggravated by their seeming power, which led them to believe:

نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ

"We are God's children and His beloveds…" (al-Maida, 18)

When reminded of Divine Retribution for their mischief, they would reply, with confidence:

لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً

"Fire shall not touch us but for a few days…" (al-Baqara, 80)

But Allah, glory unto Him, declared otherwise:

بَلٰى مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَاَحَاطَتْ بِهٖ خَطِيۤـَٔتُهٗ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

"Nay! Whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the fire; in it they shall abide." (al-Baqara, 81)

Regardless of their pact with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Jews were fostering inveterate feelings of hostility against him, which lead them to reignite old rivalries between clans and fan the flames of mischief. Allah, glory unto Him, exposed them to His Messenger and the Believers:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوا مَا
عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِى صُدُورُهُمْ اَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا
لَكُمُ الْاٰيَاتِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ. هَآ اَنْتُمْ اُولَآءِ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهٖ وَاِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوٓا اٰمَنَّا وَاِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمُ
الْاَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُوتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ.
اِنْ تَمْسَسْكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَاِنْ تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَاِنْ تَصْبِرُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ.

"O you who believe! Take not for intimates others than your own folk, who would spare no pains to ruin you; they love to hamper you. Hatred is revealed by (the utterance of) their mouths, but that which their breasts hide is greater. We have made plain for you the revelations if you will understand. Lo! You are those who love them though they love you not, and ye believe in all the Scripture. When they fall in with you they say: We believe; but when they go apart they bite their fingertips at you, for rage. Say: Perish in your rage! Lo! Allah is Aware of what is hidden in (your) breasts. If a lucky chance befalls you, it is evil unto them, and if disaster strikes you they rejoice thereat. But if ye persevere and keep from evil their guile will never harm you. Lo! Allah is surrounding what they do." (Al-i Imran, 118-120)

The Jews, who, as declared by the *ayah*, were nursing a covert yet irrepressible grudge against the Believers, were visibly discomfited following the Muslim victory at Badr. The Jews of Banu Qaynuqa, in particular, decided take their feelings of discomfort a step further and take on the Believers in battle. This was a prelude to their violation of the pact they had made with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

The Jews, aided by their close ally in Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief hypocrite, had virtually turned the Medinan Market into a witch's cauldron for devising plots against the Believers. These plots had threatening consequences for Muslims; they even included a plan of assassinating the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

By now, the Jews were recognizing no limits in their mischief and their impudence reached an extreme. One day, a Jew assaulted a Muslim woman doing trade in their market, throwing vile insults at her. Her scream for help did not fall on deaf ears, as another Muslim, who happened to be passing by at the time and had witnessed the whole saga, intervened, and charged at the Jew to fend him off. After a brief but violent scuffle, the Jew wound up dead, upon which other Jews around ambushed the Muslim, martyring him. It was a chaotic scene. This meant that the Jews had violated their pact with the Believers. So the Blessed Prophet ﷺ gathered their leaders immediately and addressed them:

"Jews; fear Allah! Fear Him lest you become overwhelmed by the doom that overwhelmed Quraysh! After all, you know very well that I am a true prophet…it is written in your Scriptures and known through the promise Allah made you!"

The Noble Messenger ﷺ thus implied that the Jews would be bound to pay the penalty of their transgression, but at the same time, he little wanted the pact broken. He thus offered a renewal of the pact. Yet, the Jewish response oozed with arrogance:

"Do you think we are group like the Quraysh, Muhammad, who know so little of warfare? Once you draw your sword on us, you will know what warfare really means!"

Allah, glory unto Him, thereupon revealed the following:

قُلْ لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ
وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ. قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِى فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا

"Say to those who disbelieve: You shall be vanquished, and driven together to hell; and evil is the resting-place. Indeed there was a sign for you in the two hosts (which) met together in encounter." (Al'i Imran, 12-13)[387]

It was none other than the Jews, who, in the past, had remonstrated against Musa عليه السلام, exclaiming:

فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ

"So go; you and your Lord and fight! We will sit here." (al-Maida, 24) Having previously refused a battle sanctioned by the Almighty, which was sure to reap them unimaginable rewards, they had now assumed a converse position, hiding behind a false bravado to take up arms in a battle that was clearly against their benefit.

Having declared war on the Muslims, the Jews had effectively violated their pact. They had now become open with their malicious intentions. Assigning Ali رضي الله عنه as the flagbearer, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ therefore marched on the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa, who in turn, retreated into their castle. In spite of having made numerous plots with the hypocrites to repel the Believers, the Jews could not even shoot an arrow, let alone take a step out of their castle. Together with having laid an unbreakable siege on their castle, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ had at the same time taken all the safety measures possible in preventing a possible hypocrite uprising from behind them.

It was the chief hypocrite Abdullah ibn Ubayy who had advised them to withdraw into their castle, assuring the Jews he would run to their aid. But he never did. Fear held him back from keeping his word.

The siege lasted fifteen days. By now, the fear already running rampant in Jewish hearts had become unbearable. Laying salt to their wound was that the aid they had been anticipating from the hypocrites never came. No other option now remained other than to surrender. So they surrendered, prepared for whatever verdict the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would pass on them.

387. Ibn Hisham, II, 422-423; Waqidi, I, 181-182; Ibn Saad, II, 30.

Banu Qaynuqa had a pact of allegiance with the Khazraj before the Hegira. So Abdullah bin Ubay, the Khazraj leader now turned hypocrite, pleaded for their pardon; for according to custom, they had to be killed.

Consequent upon a series of unrelenting pleas for their pardon, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not kill them but instead exiled them towards Syria. The Jews of Banu Qaynuqa, on the way, stopped off at Wadi'il-Qura, where they received some support from local Jews. Though they did proceed forth, the lives of the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa were similarly short-lived there as well.[388]

The Conflict of Sawiq (Dhil-hijjah, 2/ May, 624)

Abu Sufyan assumed leadership of Quraysh following the death of Abu Jahl. Vowing to take the revenge of Badr, he timidly left Mecca with a force of two hundred cavalrymen on horseback. They eventually got within an hour's distance of Medina; and taking full advantage of the dark, Abu Sufyan was able to reach the quarters of the Jews of Banu Nadir. There, he went to the house of Sallam ibn Mishkam, their leader and treasurer, who hosted his guest in the best way possible, during which he gave Abu Sufyan some inside information on the Muslims.

Leaving the Banu Nadir quarters, Abu Sufyan returned to his friends, martyring meanwhile Saad ibn Amr of the *Ansar* and setting fire to a few date gardens on the way. With these acts, Abu Sufyan now considered himself as having taken revenge of the Muslims and without delay turned his troops back to Mecca, rapidly, from fear of being followed. Soon becoming aware of the situation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ headed out in pursuit of the idolaters. They found that in order to make a swifter get away, the idolaters had dropped sacks of fried flour or *sawiq*, which hence gave its name to the conflict.[389]

The Marriage between Ali and Fatimah ؓ

The second year of Hegira also saw the marriage between Fatimah ؓ, the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ daughter, and Ali ؓ.

Many notables of Quraysh, including Abu Bakr and Omar ؓ had previously proposed to take her hand in marriage but the Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not give consent, telling them, 'he was waiting for a Divine verdict on her.' For that reason, despite the encouragement of his relatives, neither could Ali ؓ make a proposal. But a while later, with the insistence of his kin, Ali ؓ made his presence next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.[390]

388. See, Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 21-22/3001.
389. Ibn Hisham, II, 426-429; Waqidi, I, 176-180; Ibn Saad, II, 28-30.
390. Ibn Saad, VIII, 19.

The rest of what happened is recounted by Ali ؓ:

"At long last, I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He, as usual, was there with his entire majestical presence. I sat in front of him and kept silent. I could not say a word.

'Why have you come; do you need something?' he asked. 'It appears you are here to ask for Fatimah!'

'Yes', was all I could say." (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 379)

With the blessings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, Ali ؓ sold some of his property and prepared a *mihr* of 480 dirhams. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ advised him to spend two thirds of it on purchasing fragrances and the remaining one third on clothes.[391]

As trousseau, the Noble Prophet ﷺ presented Fatimah ؓ with a linen cover, a water bottle and a cushion stuffed with the grass-like *idhir*.[392] To Bilal, he then said:

"I want it to become Sunnah for my ummah to serve food during their weddings", asking him to organize the preparation. Ali ؓ then pawned his shield to a Jew and bought half a scale of barley, from which a sweet dish called *hays*[393] was prepared as *walimah*, or the wedding feast. The *Ansar* and *Muhajirun* arrived in groups to attend the meal. (Ibn Sad, VIII, 23; Abdurrazzaq, V, 487; Diyarbakri, I, 411)

Afterward, sending for a jug of water, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took *wudu*. He then called Ali ؓ next to him and sprinkled some of the water on his chest and between his shoulders. Then he also called Fatimah ؓ and did the same to her, remarking he had wed her to the best of their kin. Then to their faces and also behind them later on, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ prayed:

"Allah…I seek refuge in you, from the banished Shaytan, on behalf of them and their progeny!" (Ibn Sad, VIII, 24; Diyarbakri, I, 411)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then advised Fatimah ؓ to attend to household chores and Ali ؓ to earn for his family.[394]

Zayd ibn Haritha ؓ explains:

"I was sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when Ali and Abbas ؓ came and asked permission to enter.

'Do you know why they have come?' the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked.

391. Ibn Saad, VIII, 19.
392. Nasai, Nikah, 81.
393. *Hays* was a dish made from dates, pure oil and sifted yoghurt. Sometimes s*awiq*, or fried flour, was also added to it.
394. Kasani, IV, 24.

'No I don't', I replied.

'But I do', said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, 'allow them to enter.' So I let them in.

'Messenger of Allah…We have come find out who the dearest to you from your kin is', they said.

'Fatimah bint Muhammad', responded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

'We do not mean your immediate family, Messenger of Allah!'

'Then then my dearest kin is Zayd, whom Allah has favored through guidance and I have cared for.'

'And then?'

'Ali!' replied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

'You have relegated your uncle to last', complained Abbas ﷺ.

'But Ali acted before you in Hegira', he then explained." (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 40/3819)

Narrating the below is Ibn Abbas ﷺ:

"The Prophet of Allah ﷺ drew four lines on the ground and asked us why he had done so.

'Allah and His Messenger know best', we said. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'The most virtuous of the women of paradise…Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Fatimah bint Muhammad, Maryam bint Imran and Asiyah bint Muzahim, the wife of the Pharaoh.'" (Ahmad, I, 293)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was sensitive in attending to the education of his family members, nurturing them spiritually and preparing them for the eternal life. Following the revelation of the following *ayah*, for instance, from al-Ahzab:

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِى فِى قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا. وَقَرْنَ فِى بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا.

"O wives of the Prophet! you are not like any other of the women; If you will be on your guard, then be not soft in (your) speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease

yearn; and speak a good word. And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! And to purify you a (thorough) purifying…" (al-Ahzab, 32-33), the Blessed Prophet ﷺ continued every morning for six months to stopover at the door of Fatimah to call out, "Wake up for salat, People of the House, for Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you and purify you a thorough purifying" (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 33/3206)

Similarly, to remind them of *tahajjud* salat, one of the most important guarantors of a blissful eternal life, the Blessed Prophet would sometimes knock on the door of Ali and Fatimah, and gently say, "Are you going to offer salat?" (Bukhari, Tahajjud, 5)

In relation, Ali ﷺ recounts the striking incident below:

"Out of all the members of their family, the dearest to her father was Fatimah. Her hands would develop scars from spinning the grinder and her neck from carrying the waterskin. Sweeping around the house would moreover leave her in dust. Some slaves had been brought at one stage to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

'You should ask for a slave from your father', I suggested to her.

So Fatimah went, but seeing her father talking with some other people, she turned back. The next day, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ returned the visit.

'What was it that you needed?' he asked. Fatimah kept silent and did not answer.

'Let me explain, Messenger of Allah…' I then broke in and began to explain the matter.

'Fear Allah, Fatimah, and carry out what He has commanded!', then said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. 'Attend to your family and before you go to sleep, say *Subhanallah* thirty-three times, *Alhamdulillah* thirty-three times and *Allah-u Akbar* thirty-four times; all of them add upto a hundred. This is better for you than a servant.'

'I am pleased with Allah and His Messenger', said Fatimah. Thus the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not give her a servant." (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 19-20/2988)

In another narration, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is also reported to have said, "By Allah, I cannot give you a servant while the people of *Suffa* tie stones around their bellies to quell their hunger and I cannot find anything to spend on them. I intend on seeking ransom in return for those captives and spend what I receive for the *Suffa*!" (Ahmad, I, 106)

Sawban ﷺ, formerly a slave freed by the Noble Messenger ﷺ, explains:

"Fatimah ﷺ would be the last person the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would bid farewell with upon embarking on a journey. She would likewise be the first person whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would visit upon return. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had again returned from a journey. Fatimah ﷺ had hung a drape over her door and had made Hasan and Husayn wear two silver bracelets. Though he had come to the threshold, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not enter the house. Fatimah immediately sensed that it was those things that he saw that prevented the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from entering. So she tore down the drape and removed the silver bracelets from the wrists of her children. Hasan and Husayn, crying, went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with the bracelets in their hands. Taking hold of the bracelets, he then said:

'Take these bracelets to the family of so and so Sawban. Hasan and Husayn are of my own (*Ahl'ul-Bayt*)…I do not want them to consume in this life the goodness Allah will bless them with in the Hereafter. Then purchase a necklace made of bone for Fatimah and bracelets of a similar kind for Hasan and Husayn.'" (Abu Dawud, Tarajjul, 21/4213)

Ahl'ul-Bayt and the Love of *Ahl'ul-Bayt*

Ahl'ul-Bayt denotes the members of a family living under the same roof. In the technical sense, it covers the entire members of the Blessed Prophet's family, as well as his extended family; hence the families of, first and foremost, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, and then of Ali, Jafar, Aqil and Abbas. Just as praying for and sending greetings (*salat'u salam*) to the Noble Prophet ﷺ is a duty for all Muslims, so is respecting and adhering to the *Ahl'ul-Bayt* with love.[395]

It is impermissible for the *Ahl'ul-Bayt* to receive alms (*zakat*). Seeing on one occasion the little Hasan ﷺ take a piece of date from the pile reserved for *zakat* in the Treasury to his mouth, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ quickly made him spit it out and said:

"Don't you know that Muhammad's family does not receive *zakat*?" (Bukhari, Zakat, 57; Ahmad, I, 200)

Recounting the following is Zayd in Arqam ﷺ:

"One day, by the Hum Creek between Mecca and Medina, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood and gave us a talk. After praising and glorifying Allah, he gave us some advice, which he followed up by saying:

'People…! I, too, am but a man. Soon the messenger of my Lord will come and I will accept his invitation and leave. I leave you two important things. One of them

395. Ahmad, VI, 323.

is the light and guide that takes one to the truth, which is the Quran. Stick to it and do not let go!'

He then gave some advice regarding holding fast to the Quran and adhering to it. He then continued with the words:

'And I leave you my *Ahl'ul-Bayt*. Fear Allah and show them respect! Fear Allah and show them respect!'"

Zayd ibn Arqam ﷺ was then asked as to who exactly *Ahl'ul-Bayt* was and whether or not the Prophet's ﷺ wives were also included.

"His wives are also included", replied Zayd. "But his real *Ahl'ul-Bayt* are those for whom alms are impermissible even after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."

"And who are those?"

"They are the families of Ali, Aqil, Jafar and Abbas." (Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 36)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ has stated:

"Love Allah for having showered you with His blessings. Love me for the love of Allah. And love my *Ahl'ul-Bayt* for the sake of my love!" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 31/3789)

Again, one day holding his dear grandchildren Hasan and Husayn by the hand, the Blessed Prophet declared:

"Whoever loves me, them and their parents shall be in my company on the Day of Judgment." (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 20/3733)

The Companions had great love and respect for the family and relatives of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Naturally, one nurtures feelings of affection not only for the beloved but, to the extent of the love felt, also for his or her friends and moreover every little thing that helps remind of the beloved, like the clothes worn, foods eaten, and so forth. The deeper the love grows, the deeper it permeates everything that surrounds the beloved.

The Companions would let their love bursting forth from the depths of their hearts for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ show with various acts, like holding the stirrups of a horse or a camel a relative of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was to mount.[396] Profoundly conscious that on the Day of Judgment all other ties of blood would be severed except for the bond one had with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, they were eager to marry one of his relatives to reinforce their bond of love with a bondship of kin.[397]

The descendants of the Noble Messenger ﷺ today survive in various parts throughout the Muslim world. The term *Sayyid* is used in reference to those to have

396. Haythami, IX, 348.
397. Haythami, IX, 173.

descended through the line of Husayn ﷺ, and *Sharif* for the descendants of Hasan ﷺ. The Ottomans referred to *sayyids* as *amir*, and the turban they wrapped around their heads as *amir* turbans. Women of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ lineage would also carry a green mark on their hijabs.

Serving the *Ahl'ul-Bayt* was considered by the Ottomans a duty, to the point where they even found an official institution for the purpose. Officials exclusively entrusted with the duty of seeing to this service were called *naqib'ul-ashraf*, also chosen from among the members of the *Ahl'ul-Bayt*. Among the various aspects of their needs the *naqib'ul-ashraf* dealt with included registering their lineage, births and deaths included, preventing them from entering any old profession, distributing among them their share of taxes and spoils and precluding their women from marrying men not their equal.[398]

Being successors of the children of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and owing to the honor of the duty they carried out, the *naqib'ul-ashraf* were given the one of the highest official ranks, second behind the Caliph in protocol. The *naqib'ul-ashraf* would be the first to officially pledge allegiance to the sultan upon his ascension to the throne and pray for his wellbeing, only after which the remainder of the protocol would follow. Priority of congratulation during eids also belonged to the *naqib'ul-ashraf*, for whom the sultan would rise to greet during the proceedings of both eids.

A *sayyid* or a *sharif* found guilty of committing a crime or acting in an unacceptable manner would be dealt with by the *naqib'ul-ashraf*, if in Istanbul, or by the official head of a district, if elsewhere. Before the actual punishment, the official would remove the green turban from their heads and kiss it; and eventually restoring it once the punishment came to an end.

398. Haythami, IX, 173.

THE THIRD YEAR OF HEGIRA

Uhud: A Battle Underlain by Wisdom

Like Badr, the Battle of Uhud[399] was a fierce conflict with the Meccan idolaters, which took place in the third year of Hegira, in the month of Shawwal.

The idolaters of Mecca were overcome with enormous grief following their demise at Badr. All of them had lost someone close in the battle, which only served to aggravate their insatiable desire for vengeance. Burning to settle the scores most was Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, the recently instated leader of Quraysh. Soon, they were able to prepare an army of three-thousand idolaters, all of whom were desperately aching for retribution. Goods from the caravan Abu Sufyan had managed to salvage in the lead up to the Battle of Badr were used to fund the army. Neighboring Arab tribes were also called to help.[400]

In the meantime, Abbas, the uncle of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, informed Medina of the proceedings.[401] The Prophet of Allah ﷺ thereupon immediately gathered the Companions to discuss whether they should remain in Medina and adopt a defensive strategy, or set out from the town as part of an offensive line of attack. The Noble Messenger ﷺ himself wanted to go defensive.[402]

In the end, however, compliant with the desires of the youth too young to take part in Badr, who therefore pleaded on the grounds that 'they had been waiting for this moment all along', and with the opinions of other warriors lead by Hamza ﷺ, it was decided that they were to meet the idolaters outside of Medina in an offensive.[403]

399. Uhud is approximately a mile to the north of Medina.
400. Waqidi, I, 199-203.
401. Ibn Saad, II, 37.
402. This was because of a dream the Blessed Prophet ﷺ saw, which he later explained: "In my dream, I was swinging a sword around; its head had been broken off. It turns out that this referred to the troubles the Muslims were inflicted with at Uhud. Then, I swung the sword around once more. The sword was now in a better condition than even before. That referred to the blessing of Allah the Almighty in the form of conquests and gathering the Muslims together. In the same dream, I also saw cattle and another blessing given by Allah. The cattle became manifest in a group of Muslims on the day of Uhud (in their becoming martyred). The blessing I saw became manifest through the conquests Allah gave us following Badr and the rewards Allah blessed us with in return for the perseverance of Badr." (Bukhari, Tabir, 39, 44; Manaqib, 25; Muslim, Ruya, 20)
403. Ibn Hisham, III, 6-7.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then entered his room and wore his armor. Meanwhile, those wanting to wage a defensive war in Medina, led by Saad ibn Muadh and Usayd ibn Khudayr, had persuaded the others, telling them they were "wrong to insist leaving Medina, when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ wished otherwise. What he is commanded with comes from the heavens; so leave this matter to him, and do as he tells you!" (Waqidi, I, 213-214)

Without wasting time, they rushed to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and said, "We will never defy your opinion, Messenger of Allah. Do whatever you feel is right!"

But the reply was crystal clear:

"Once he has worn it, a prophet removes his armor only after the battle! You now concern yourselves with doing as I tell you to! Now let's set out in the name of Allah! If you keep patient and stick to your duties, then Allah the Almighty will grant you victory!" (Waqidi, I, 214; Ibn Sad, II, 38)

Following the Friday salat, leaving Abdullah ibn Maqtum as deputy, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ departed Medina with a thousand man force. But with the turning back of Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the chief hypocrite, with his three hundred men on the way, the number was reduced to seven hundred, consequent upon which Allah, glory unto Him, revealed the following:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَبِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.
وَلْيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أَوِ ادْفَعُوا
قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ
يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَّا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ.

"And what befell you on the day when the two armies met (at Uhud) was with Allah's knowledge, and that He might know the believers. And that He might know the hypocrites; and it was said to them: Come, fight in Allah's way, or defend yourselves. They said: If we knew fighting, we would certainly have followed you. They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts, and Allah best knows what they conceal." (Al Imran, 166-167)

وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ.
إِذْ هَمَّتْ طَّآئِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى اللهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ.

"And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family to lodge the believers in encampments for war and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice, and Allah was the guardian of them both, and in Allah should the believers trust." (Al Imran, 121-122)

The departure of the hypocrites from the Muslim army proved to be a blessing in disguise, as, far from weakening the army, it served to reinforce and invigorate it spiritually, by virtue of cleansing it from the double dealing, cowardly men. A possible betrayal in the heat of the battle, in hindsight, could have been more disastrous, shaking Muslim confidence.

The Companions' Passion for Martyrdom

Amr ibn Jamuh, the leader of the Salimah clan of the *Ansar*, was a lame man, whose four sons used to participate in battles alongside the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Right when the Believers were about to leave Medina for Uhud, Amr expressed his desire to join, too.

"You are not obliged to go to battle", said his sons. "Allah considers you to have a legitimate excuse. We are going in your place, anyhow."

"You stood in the way of me entering Paradise on the day of Badr", he responded. "Even if I survive today, by Allah, I will definitely become a martyr one day and enter Paradise!" Amr then turned to his wife:

"Do you expect me to sit with you while everyone else vies for Paradise through martyrdom?" Then grabbing his shield, he made his way out of the house towards the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, praying, "Allah…Do not grant me a return to my family!"

He soon arrived next to the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

"My sons wish to leave me behind in Medina. They are preventing me from setting out for battle with you, whereas I, by Allah, am eager to enter Paradise in spite of my lame leg!" he said to the Messenger of Allah, who said:

"Allah has excused you. *Jihad* is not obligatory for you."

"But Messenger of Allah," replied Amr, "wouldn't you also wish to see me fight in the way of Allah until the very end and walk to Paradise with this lame leg of mine?"

"I would", replied the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Then turning to Amr's sons, he said, "Withhold your father from battle no more. Perhaps Allah will grant him martyrdom!"

Amr turned to the direction of *qibla*.

"Allah, grant me martyrdom and do not make me return to my family deprived and grieved!" he prayed.

Ending up taking active part at Uhud, Amr was noted to have kept on saying during the battle, "Paradise, by Allah, is what I miss". Consequently, he became a martyr along with one of his sons who was trying to protect him. Later, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, regarding him:

"By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my life resides, I saw Amr limping in Paradise." (Waqidi, I, 264-265; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, IV, 208)

Inspecting the army just before their march to Uhud, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was refusing to admit those who were too young to take part. Among those deemed too young were Samurah ibn Jundab and Rafi ibn Hadij. Zuhayr ibn Rafi intervened on Rafi's behalf, stating, "Rafi is a skillful archer, Messenger of Allah!" The rest is explained by Rafi himself:

"I was standing on my toes in order to look tall. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ eventually allowed me to remain. Hearing that, Samurah said to Muray ibn Sinan, his foster father, 'The Messenger of Allah has given Rafi permission to stay and told me to return, yet I am a better wrestler than Rafi!' So Muray ؓ told this to the Messenger of Allah, who, then looked at both Samurah and I, and told us to lock arms in wrestling. We wrestled and Samurah beat me. As a result, he was allowed to remain, too. (Tabari, Tarih, II, 505-506; Waqidi, I, 216)

Upon reaching Uhud, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took Mount Uhud behind his army of Believers and placed fifty archers on Aynayn Hill fifty in case the enemy would attempt an incursion through the valley in between. He designated Abdullah ibn Jubayr as their commander, and stressed them to, "…cover our backs and regardless of an enemy win or loss, do not leave your place before I tell you to!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 10; Ahmad, I, 288)

As was custom, the Battle, again, got under way with a one on one challenge, a *mubaraza*. It only took one swift strike for Ali ؓ to take care of the idolaters' flagbearer, Talha. His brother Othman, who took the Quraysh flag after Talha, did not trouble Hamza ؓ. Neither did their third flagbearer cause much worry for Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ؓ.

The Battle then began with all its intensity. Right before the ferocity of the battle reached its highest pitch, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, holding aloft a sword in his

hand, inscribed on which were the words, "There is shame and disgrace in cowardice, while honor and dignity in courage", asked:

"Who is willing to take this from me?"

The Companions all put their hands up, competing for the coveted sword.

"Who will take this sword from me in return for paying its due?" then asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, after which they began feeling a little uneasy about taking it. But Abu Dujanah ؓ, from the *Ansar*, asked:

"What is its due, Messenger of Allah?"

"…for you to fight with the enemy until it becomes bent and twisted!" said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"I will take it and I promise to pay its due!" said Abu Dujanah.

Taking the sword and with a red turban around his head, Abu Dujanah ؓ began swaggering amid the ranks, with a seeming look of arrogance. Seeing his boastful demeanor, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ remarked, "That is the kind of walk Allah hates, except in situations like this!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 11-12; Waqidi, I, 259; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 128)

Just before the Battle, Muhayriq, a Jewish scholar, accepted Islam. He very well knew that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ perfectly corresponded with the attributes disclosed in the Torah; yet he could not make a clear breast of it until the day of Uhud. As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was leaving for Uhud, with the Companions behind him, Muhayriq snapped at his fellow Jews:

"I am certain that you are very well aware of Muhammad being a prophet and that you are obliged to help him!"

The Jews were sarcastic:

"Today is Saturday…We cannot do anything!"

"There is no such thing as Saturday for you!" answered angrily Muhayriq, as he grabbed his sword and what else he may need. Before leaving, he left the following message to one of his relatives:

"If I am killed today, Muhammad is to take all my inheritance. He will make use of it in the best possible way as shown by Allah." It did turn out to be his will, as he was martyred at Uhud. The date garden he left behind was taken by the Noble Messenger ﷺ and made into a *waqf*. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ complemented him with the words:

"Muhayriq is the best of Jews!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 38; Waqidi, I, 263; Ibn Sad, I, 501-503)

Amazing scenes followed one after the other at Uhud.

A Medinan by the name of Quzman after having killed seven idolaters in the Battle died as a result of a fatal wound. In spite of this, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ declared:

"Quzman is Hell bound." This was for no other reason than when congratulated, by Qatadah ibn Numan, during his final breaths, over the blessing of being martyred in the way of Allah, glory unto Him, Quzman had replied:

"I fought for my tribe, not for martyrdom", after which he pushed his weight onto his sword and committed suicide. (Waqidi, I, 263)

In contrast, Usayram, who later felt remorse over his initially stern opposition to his people's decision to enter Islam, came to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ armed from head to toe, and asked:

"Should I join you in the Battle or first accept Islam?"

"Accept Islam then join us", responded the Noble Messenger ﷺ, whereupon Usayram became a Muslim, before a battle which was to see him fall martyr. Regarding Usayram, the Blessed Prophet said, "He worked little, but gained a lot!" (Bukhari, Jihad, 13; Muslim, Imarah, 144)

His final words to the curious onlookers, as he lay among the wounded, were, "I only came for Islam, fought in the way of Allah and His Messenger; and I lay wounded as a consequence."

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ later subjected him to a riddle where he would ask other Companions to tell him "the person who entered Paradise without offering salat even once in his life." It was, of course, none other than Amr ibn Thabit, better known as Usayram. (Ibn Hisham, III, 39-40; Waqidi, I, 262)

During the Battle, Abdullah ibn Jahsh's ﷺ sword was broken. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ gave him a date branch in its place, which, in Abdullah's hands, turned into a sword. Abdullah ﷺ used the sword until he was martyred. Called *Urjun*, while with the inheritors of Abdullah ﷺ, the sword was later purchased by a Turkish chieftain for two-hundred dinars.[404]

The Muslim onslaught of never before seen enthusiasm brought victory in a short amount of time; the idolaters, despite an evident superiority of numbers and weaponry, began to flee. Pursuing the idolaters for some time, the Muslims, beginning to feel certain that battle was now well and truly won, left the chase and instead turned towards collecting the wealth of spoils the idolaters had left behind in concern for their lives. Not only that, even a bulk of the archers, despite being des-

404. Ibn Athir, *Usd'ul-Ghaba,* III, 195; Diyarbakri, I, 433.

perately reminded of the Prophet's ﷺ instructions against leaving the hill until they were told, left their positions in pursuit of spoils. Only Abdullah, the commander of the archers, and seven others were left standing on Aynayn Hill.

That proved to be the turning point. Khalid ibn Walid, the shrewd commander of the enemies, had now found the opportunity he had been waiting for with his cavalrymen all along. In a swift raid around the back of the hill, they were able martyr the eight archers left high and dry on the hill, who could not stand the ferocity of the incursion. The ferocity would soon extend to the entire battlefield; the Believers busy with collecting the spoils were awoken to a brutal raid behind them, made worse moments later when the fleeing idolaters took notice of the turn of the tide and ran back to the battlefield to complete the ambush. The Muslim Army was now wedged in a crossfire. They found themselves in a chaotic frenzy.

Hamza the King of All Martyrs

The swing of fortune towards the way of Quraysh saw the martyring of Hamza ﷺ, the gallant warrior of Islam running to and fro in the ranks, by the spear of Wahshi. Still a slave, Wahshi had executed the task only to gain the freedom promised him by Hind. Burning inside with malicious feelings of vengeance for a while now, Hind was brutal enough to take out Hamza's liver and dig her teeth into it. She was thus labeled *akilat'ul-akbad*, the liver eater.

The fall of Hamza ﷺ sent the Muslim ranks into a wave of mourning. Already in turmoil, the Muslims now entirely disintegrated, a scene described by the Almighty in the following:

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ
وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَرَاكُمْ مَّا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ
يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ
عَفَا عَنْكُمْ وَاللهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

"And certainly Allah made good to you His promise when you slew them by His permission, until when you became weak-hearted and disputed about the affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you loved; of you were some who desired this world and of you were some who desired the hereafter; then He turned you away from them that He might try you; and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allah is Gracious to the believers." (Al Imran, 152)

Allah, glory unto Him, admonishes the archers who deserted their spots, referring to them as 'desiring the world', praising at the same time those who stood their grounds, referring to them as 'desiring the Hereafter.'

The idolaters, that day, martyred many Muslims. A group of them even undertook an onslaught that only had the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in mind and not long after, attacks targeting the Prophet of Allah ﷺ became more frequent. Talha ibn Ubaydullah ؓ says:

"When the Companions disintegrated, the idolaters mounted an onslaught and surrounded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from all sides; so much that I did not know whether to defend him from the front, the back, the left or the right. So I swung my sword both to the front and the back, relentlessly, until they ultimately withdrew." (Waqidi, I, 254)

Malik Ibn Zuhayr, the idolaters' sharpshooter, shot an arrow at the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Instantaneously realizing that the arrow would collect the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Talha ibn Ubaydullah ؓ stuck out his hand. Piercing his finger, the blow ended up leaving Talha crippled.[405]

Certain Companions of both the *Ansar* and *Muhajirun* encircled the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, vowing to defend him until death, to be human shields in protecting his life and never to leave his side. (Ibn Sad, II, 45; Waqidi, I, 240)

Abu Talha ؓ was a powerful archer, who could put great force behind his arrows. Two or three bows were smashed through the sheer force of his arms that day. Whoever he saw pass by him with a bag of arrows, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was telling them to:

"Empty the bag next to Abu Talha!" Each time the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would raise his head to catch a glimpse of the idolaters who had them ambushed from behind, Abu Talha ؓ would plea:

"May my parents be sacrificed in your way, Messenger of Allah; do not lift your head, for an arrow flung by the idolaters might strike you. Allow my body to act as your shield…Let whatever is bound for you, strike me instead!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 18)

To protect the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Qatadah ibn Numan ؓ stood in front of him and shot arrows at the idolaters until his bow was disfigured. More still, in the process he was struck with an arrow right in his eye; his eyeball began to slide down his cheek. Moved, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took Qatadah's eyeball and inserted it back

405. Ibn Saad, III, 217.

in its place. That eye, thereafter, had a clearer vision and looked distinctively better than his other eye.[406]

The female Companion Umm Umarah ﷺ is among those who gallantly repelled the enemy with her bow and arrows. Upon returning to Medina after the Battle, the Noble Messenger ﷺ is known to have stated:

"Whenever I looked to my left and right during the Battle, I saw Umm Umarah fight alongside me." (Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, IV, 479)

Heartened by the many praises and prayers the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said with regard to her, Umm Umarah furthermore insisted him to:

"…pray Allah so we can be your neighbors in Paradise!"

So the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ prayed, "Allah…make them my neighbors and friends in Paradise!" Excited, Umm Umarah ﷺ then said, "I could not care less, from now, whatever kind of troubles were to come to me in this life!" (Waqidi, I, 273; Ibn Sad, VIII, 415)

At the heat of the Battle, during one of the violent attacks aimed at the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, Utbah, Saad ibn Abi Waqqas' ﷺ idolater brother, threw a rock at the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. The impact sent two loops from the Prophet's ﷺ helmet flying forth, piercing through his cheek and breaking his tooth; an incident that shook the earth and heavens.[407] To make matters worse, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ fell into a ditch dug by the sordid Abu Amir to ensnare the Believers. Ali ﷺ took the Blessed Prophet ﷺ from one hand, Talha ibn Ubaydullah ﷺ from the other and they pulled him out of the ditch. Abu Ubaydah ibn Jarrah ﷺ pulled out one of the loops that had punctured the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ cheek, with his teeth, and in the process broke one of his own front tooth. In pulling out the other loop, he broke yet another. That sight was enough to depress and demoralize the entire Companions, even the angels. The Companions were deeply hurt in witnessing something so difficult to bear, and urged the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to:

"…curse the idolaters of Quraysh!"

But the Noble Prophet ﷺ replied:

"I have not been sent as a curser, but as a mercy and an inviter to the path of truth. Allah…Guide my tribe for they do not know!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 24; Haythami, VI, 117; Waqidi, I, 244-247; Qadi Iyad, I, 95)

The moment he became wounded, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ remarked:

406. Hakim, III, 334/5281; Haythami, VI, 113; Ibn Saad, III, 453.

407. The front teeth of all the offsprings of the treacherous Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas, as a Divine sign, came out naturally broken. (Ramazanoğlu Mahmûd Sâmî, *Uhud Gazvesi,* p. 26)

"Allah has become very angry with the people who have wounded the face of His Messenger!"

Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ﵁ has said:

"By Allah, the moment I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say those words, I never felt greater anger, neither before nor after, in wanting to kill my brother Utbah for what he had done."

Saad ﵁, in fact, repeatedly did break through the enemy ranks vying for his brother's blood, only to be prevented by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ from carrying the execution through.[408]

Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ﵁ was meanwhile showering the idolaters in arrows, with the Noble Prophet ﷺ persistently encouraging him with the words, "Shoot your arrows, Saad; may my parents be sacrificed for you!" Ali ﵁ who had witnessed the scene, later on remarked:

"I have never heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'may my parents be sacrificed for you', for anyone, except for Saad." (Tirmidhi, Adab, 61, Manaqib, 26; Ahmad, I, 92)

Even amid this whirlwind of turmoil, relying on the Almighty with an irrepressible fortitude of *iman*, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was, on the one hand, wiping the blood of his face, and on the other, seeking refuge in Allah, glory unto Him, was continuing to pray:

"Allah…My people are ignorant; they do not know what they are doing… Guide them!"

Sahl ibn Saad ﵁ recounts:

"When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ became wounded at Uhud, Fatimah ﵂ began to wash the blood of his face, while Ali ﵁ was pouring water for her. Seeing that the water was only increasing the blood flow all the more, Fatimah ﵂ got hold of a piece of cane, burnt it until it turned into ash, and then began to dress the wound. The blood eventually stopped." (Bukhari, Jihad, 80; Maghazi, 24; Muslim, Jihad, 101)

The Battle of Uhud thus became a stage for scenes of such sorrow. The upper hand the Believers had at the outset had switched over to the idolaters, for defying the instructions they were given. Only fourteen people remained around the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. To the others, who had now found themselves in a deep state of panic, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ began calling out:

408. Waqidi, I, 245.

"Servants of Allah…! Come to me, I am the Messenger of Allah!" (Waqidi, I, 237)

The Quran presents a picture of the scene in the following words:

إِذْ تُصْعِدُونَ وَلَا تَلْوُونَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَيكُمْ فَأَثَابَكُمْ غَمًّا بِغَمٍّ لِّكَيْلَا تَحْزَنُوا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ.

"When you climbed (the hill) and paid no heed to anyone, while the messenger, in your rear, was calling you (to fight). Therefor He rewarded you grief for (his) grief, that (He might teach) you not to sorrow either for that which ye missed or for that which befell you. Allah is Informed of what you do." (Al-i Imran, 153)

Another portion of Muslims, who had heard the fast spreading rumor that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was martyred, were rattled to their marrows; such that some of them, thinking '…there was no point in remaining especially after even the Prophet of Allah was martyred', began leaving the field. They only had the protection of Medina in mind as they were turning back, though they were nonetheless dissuaded from doing so by the women of Medina.

Another group, thinking '…even if the Messenger of Allah is dead, Allah is immortal', lost none of their composure and continued fighting. One certain Companion belonging to this group was Anas ibn Nadr ﷺ, the uncle of the more renowned Anas ibn Malik. After receiving the horrible rumor that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, too, had been martyred, from certain Muslims, who had given up all hope, not knowing what to do in a state of utter despair, Anas ibn Nadr ﷺ shouted the following words, personifying the immense fortitude and reliance in Allah he had deep inside:

"What is the point of living after the Messenger of Allah? Come on, fight like him and be martyred!" He then plunged towards the idolaters, moments after which, inflicted with over eighty wounds, he ended up a martyr. (Ahmad, III, 253; Ibn Hisham, III, 31)

Anas ﷺ explains the following:

"My uncle Anas ibn Nadr could not take part at Badr, something he found very hard to cope with. He even told the Messenger of Allah that '…Allah will surely see what I will do if granted opportunity to fight in a battle against the idolaters!'

So he took part in Uhud. Once the Muslims began to disintegrate, implying his fellow Believers, he said, 'O my Lord! I apologize to You on their behalf'; and implying the idolaters, he said, '…and I am distant from what they are doing, Allah'.

He then advanced forward and came across Saad ibn Muadh, to whom he remarked, 'Paradise is what I am after, Saad; and by the Lord of the Kaabah I can smell its scent coming from the skirts of Uhud!'

Later, when recounting the incident to the Messenger of Allah, Saad confessed:

'I was not able to do what he did!'

We eventually found our uncle martyred. His body carried over eighty sword, spear and arrow wounds. The idolaters had mutilated their body. Many of his parts were missing, for which reason nobody could identify him at first. Only his sister was able to, and that from his fingertips. This *ayah* was revealed in celebration of my uncle and those alike:

'Of the believers are men who are true to the covenant which they made with Allah: so of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the least.' (al-Ahzab, 23)" (Bukhari, Jihad, 12; Muslim, Imarah, 148)

An overwhelming majority of those, who began fleeing from the battlefield once the tide of victory turned, had the intention continuing the battle away from the field. Allah, glory unto Him, addressed them in the following:

وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

"And certainly you desired death before you met it, so indeed you have seen it and you look (at it)." (Al-i Imran, 143)

Those, who despite assuring they were ready to die, turned away after hearing the unfounded rumors of the death of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, were more sternly rebuked by the Almighty:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِى اللهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ.

"And Muhammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least and Allah will reward the grateful." (Al-i Imran, 144)

In defiance of all the adversities, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ unwaveringly stood his ground like the North Star and resisted the onslaught with a prophetic resolution; a

heroic courage that set an exemplary pattern for his Companions, in virtual echo of the words of the Almighty:

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ. إِنْ يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُ
وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

"Faint not nor grieve, for you will overcome them if ye are (indeed) believers. If you have received a blow, the (disbelieving) people have received a blow the like thereof. These are (only) the vicissitudes which We cause to follow one another for mankind, to the end that Allah may know those who believe and may choose witnesses from among you; and Allah loveth not wrong-doers." (Al-i Imran, 139-140)

By the grace and mercy Allah, glory unto Him, extended to His Messenger and His Believers, in spite of all the turmoil that emerged on the day of Uhud, the idolaters could not reach their aim. The Companions, in the meantime, began regrouping around the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and warded off the idolater assault, protecting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with an epic defense, soon inflicting the idolaters with great casualties as before. Taking advantage of the regained stability, the Noble Messenger ﷺ retreated to Mount Uhud. Although Abu Sufyan, this time tried to mount an offensive from the upper end of the mountain, his effort proved fruitless.

At that very frightful moment, the Almighty overtook the Believers with a calmed feeling of drowsiness and they soon found themselves dosing off, on the spot, into a peaceful sleep. They were hardly managing to even keep a grip on their swords, repeatedly dropping them on the ground. Only the Muslims were overcome with sleep; the few doubting hypocrites among them could not blink an eye, faltering from one state of fear into another, terrified that the idolaters would then come and put them to the sword.[409]

There was a brief war of words, at one stage, between Abu Sufyan and Omar ﷺ.[410] Making a move to withdraw afterwards, Abu Sufyan, disgruntled at not having achieved the decisive result he had wished for, shouted:

"Let's meet again next year at Badr!"

409. Bukhari, Maghazi, 18, 20; Waqidi, I, 295-296.
410. Ibn Hisham, III, 45.

Omar ﷺ waited to see what kind of a response the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would give. He then told Omar ﷺ to say, "Allah willing, that shall be our meeting place next year!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 45; Ibn Sad, II, 59)

The idolaters were turning back for no other reason than that the seeds of fear had, once again, crept up their spines. One of the miracles the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was blessed with, after all, was that he would cast fear into the hearts of the enemy, regardless of the extent of their distance away from him. Allah, glory unto Him, says:

سَنُلْقِى فِى قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَيهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ.

"We will cast fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they set up with Allah that for which He has sent down no authority and their abode is the fire, and evil is the abode of the unjust." (Al-i Imran, 151)

Thus the idolaters, affected by the fear cast into their hearts, could not even dare to invade the defenseless Medina, in spite of the temporary upper hand they enjoyed against the Believers. Moreover, they were returning with not even a single Muslim captive. This was surely a blessing of Allah, glory unto Him, upon His Messenger and the Believers.

As the idolaters were retreating from Uhud, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ commanded the Muslims to line up in rows, so he could '…praise and pray to Allah.'

The Companions lined up in rows behind the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, who then prayed:

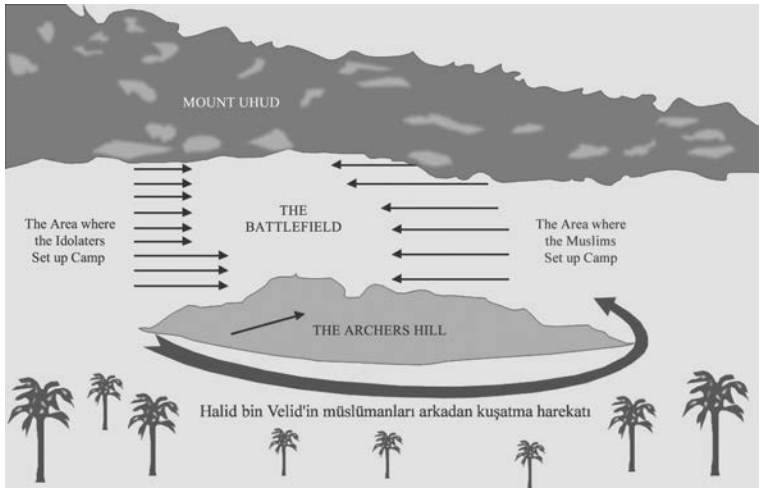
"Allah…All thanks and praises are for you! Allah…There is nobody to constrict what you have extended and prospered and nobody to extend and prosper what you have constricted! There is nobody to straighten what you have deviated and deviate who you have guided! There is nobody to give what you have withheld, and prevent what you have given! There is nobody to bring near what you have banished, and banished what you have brought near!

O my Lord! Sprinkle us with Your mercy and abundance, Your grace and benevolence! O my Lord! I ask from You eternal blessings that will never change and wither away! O my Lord! I wish from You blessings in the day of poverty and security in the day of fear! O my Lord! I seek refuge in You from the evils of both what You give and what You have not given!

O my Lord! Endear *iman* to us; adorn our hearts with it! Make us hate *kufr*, transgression and rebellion! Render us among those who know what is beneficial for Here and the Hereafter, those who have been guided to the right path!

O my Lord! Take our lives as Muslims and make us live as Muslims! Incorporate us into the group of the righteous, without us loosing our honor and dignity and becoming subject to tribulation!

O my Lord! Crush the nonbelievers who deny Your prophets and distract people from Your path! Engulf them in Your tribulation and punishment! O my Lord! Crush the nonbelievers whom You have given Books, too! The Lord…who is the True and the Real…Amin!" (Ahmad, III, 424; Hakim, I, 686-687/1868; III, 26/4308)


MOUNT UHUD
The Area where the Idolaters Set up Camp
THE BATTLEFIELD
The Area where the Muslims Set up Camp
THE ARCHERS HILL
Halid bin Velid'in müslümanları arkadan kuşatma harekatı

Saad ibn Rabi': The Companion who closed the Door of Excuse

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent a companion of his to the battlefield in hope of finding out the whereabouts of Saad ibn Rabi'. No matter how thoroughly he searched, the Companion could not find Saad ibn Rabi'. All his shouts returned unreplied. Losing hope, he called out one last time:

"Saad! I have been sent by the Messenger of Allah to see if you were among the alive or the martyrs!"

Meanwhile, living his final moments and without the least energy to respond, hearing it was the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself who was curious as to his wellbeing, Saad gathered all his remaining energy, and replied, with a frail moan:

"I am now among the dead!" Evidently, he was now gazing at beyond. The Companion ran towards Saad ﷺ. His body vividly exhibited countless sword wounds. Saad had one last stock of energy to whisper the incredible words below:

"By Allah, so long as your eyes are moving, if you do not protect the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from his enemies and allow something bad to happen to him, you have no excuse that you shall put forth in Divine Sight!" (Muwatta, Jihad, 41; Hakim, III, 221/4906; Ibn Hisham, III, 47)

Saad ibn Rabi' ﷺ bade farewell to the life of the world after bequeathing these words, a legacy for the whole *ummah* to uphold.

The Martyrs of Uhud

Once the idolaters left the field of Uhud in their entirety, the Prophet ﷺ and the Believers descended to the field to bury their martyrs. There were exactly seventy of them, including the fearless Hamza and Musab ibn Umayr ﷺ.

Musab ibn Umayr ﷺ, the flagbearer of the Muslim army, was martyred while trying to defend the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. An angel, thereupon, assumed the appearance of Musab and seized the flag; and the Noble Prophet ﷺ, not yet aware of the fact that Musab was martyred, commanded him to:

"Advance, Musab, advance!"

The flagbearer, then, turned around and threw a glance at the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who, recognizing the angel, realized Musab had been martyred. Though his body was later found, the Believers could not get hold of a large enough shroud to cover his corpse. (Ibn Sad, III, 121-122)

Covering his upper body with the clothes he had on, meant his lower body was exposed; and covering his lower body, left his upper body out in the open. So the Companions resorted to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to determine how they were to take care of his corpse. The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ advised them to cover Musab's upper body using his clothes and to use nice smelling weeds for his lower body.

In retrospect, Musab was born to one of the noblest and richest families of Mecca. Almost the entire youth of Mecca were envious of him. It is even said that girls would sprinkle roses on his path. But he, in spite of all the pressures of his family, chose to be by the side of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, brushing aside all their worldly fortunes. It was a homage to the immense passion with which was he attached to the Noble Prophet ﷺ that an angel assumed his appearance as he lay martyred on the field of Uhud. It was a tribute, by the Almighty, for all the sacrifices Musab had made.

This moving scene made a long-lasting and profound impact on Muslim hearts. Years later, when the Muslims had strength and reigned sovereign, a few different kinds of dishes was brought in front of Abdurrahman ibn Awf ﷺ, among the

wealthier Companions, by his son, to break his fast. Becoming emotional, however, he said:

"Musab was martyred at the Battle of Uhud. He was more virtuous than I. But as a shroud, he had only a mantle. If we were to cover his head with it, his legs would lay bare; and his head, if we covered his legs. Then afterward, we were given all the riches of the world…and I fear we have been rewarded for all our deeds on Earth." Abdurrahman ﷺ then broke down in tears and left the food without touching it. (Bukhari, Janaiz, 27)

Among all the martyrs of Uhud, it was Hamza ﷺ, the outstanding hero of the Muslim Army that sent the hearts of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and Believers into the most unspeakable grief.

Safiyya ﷺ rushed towards the martyrs to identify her brother Hamza ﷺ. She was met by her son Zubayr ibn Awwam ﷺ.

"The Messenger of Allah commands you to return", he told her.

"Why?" she exclaimed. "So I don't see my brother? I have already heard he has been butchered. But he has been inflicted with this, only for the sake of Allah. Nothing short would have consoled us, anyway. *Inshallah* I shall bear patient and anticipate its rewards from Allah."

Zubayr went to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and conveyed to him the words of his mother.

"Then, allow her to see him!" the Prophet of Allah ﷺ then said. Safiyya proceeded to stand and pray next to Hamza's corpse. (Ibn Hisham, III, 48; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, IV, 349)

Zubayr ibn Awwam ﷺ narrates what unfolded thereafter in an emotional scene, exemplary of Muslim brotherhood.

"My mother took out the two mantles she had brought with her and said, 'I have brought these so you can use them as shrouds for Hamza.' So we got the mantles and returned next to Hamza's corpse. Next to him, however, was another martyr, from the *Ansar*, without a shroud. We felt ashamed to wrap both mantles around Hamza at the expense of leaving the Ansari shroudless, so we decided to shroud them with one mantle each. But because one mantle was bigger than the other, we drew lots to decide between them." (Ahmad, I, 165)

This emotional account verifies that feelings of kinship had well and truly made way for the brotherhood of *iman*.

Nine martyrs, at a time, were brought next to the corpse of Hamza ﷺ, and buried after their funeral salat, with Hamza ﷺ remaining for another nine to be

brought. That way, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ eventually offered multiple funeral salats for his beloved uncle, the king of martyrs.[411]

According to the report of Jabir ؓ, the Noble Messenger ﷺ brought the martyrs of Uhud together in pairs, placing to the *qibla* side of the grave whichever one of them knew and lived a more enhanced Quranic way of life. (Bukhari, Janaiz, 73, 75)

To gather news from Uhud, Aisha ؓ set out from Medina with a group of women. Near Harra, she came upon the righteous Hind bint Amr ؓ, who, having loaded a camel with the corpses of her husband Amr ibn Jamuh, her son Khallad and brother Abdullah, was making her way back to Medina.

"What is the latest at Uhud?" Aisha ؓ asked her anxiously.

"All is well", she replied. "The Messenger of Allah is alive and well. Nothing else matters!"

"Who are they?" then asked Aisha ؓ, pointing to the corpses on camelback.

"My husband Amr, my brother Abdullah and my son Khallad", replied the righteous Hind.

"Where are you taking them?"

"…To Medina, where I shall bury them." Hind then tried spurring the camel, which was beginning to lose pace, to advance, but the camel came to a complete halt and crouched.

"Is it because it has too much to carry?" asked Aisha ؓ.

"I do not know. It is odd for normally it is able to carry twice as much as any other. It seems something strange has come over it now!"

Forced to get back up, the camel rose, only to crouch back down once made to turn to the direction of Medina. When steered towards Uhud, however, the camel began to gallop. Hind informed the Blessed Prophet ﷺ of the situation, seeking advice.

"The camel is on duty. Did Amr leave a will at all?"

"Just before Amr left for Uhud", she explained, "he turned to *qibla* and prayed, 'Allah, grant me martyrdom; do not make me return to my family deprived and grieved.'"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon stated, "That is why the camel does not proceed. Whoever from among you, *Ansar*, has made a vow to Allah, should stick by his word. Your husband Amr is among the righteous, Hind. From the moment he

411. Ibn Majah, Janaiz, 28.

was martyred, angels shaded him under their wings and looked for the best place to bury him. Your husband Amr, your son Khallad and your brother Abdullah shall unite in Paradise as friends."

Upon hearing these words, desiring to be together again in the eternal life with her righteous husband Amr, Hind insisted:

"Please, Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah so I am united with them, too." (Waqidi, I, 264-265; Ibn Hajar, Fath'ul-Bari, III, 216; Ibn Abdilbarr, III, 1168)

There was yet another stirring scene.

On the Day of Uhud, Medina trembled with the news that the Prophet ﷺ had been martyred. Panic broke loose as screams reached the Heavens. Such that despite being told that her husband, two sons, father and brother had been martyred on the battlefield, Sumayra ﷺ, an *Ansari* woman, remained indifferent, concerned only to be comforted with the news of the Blessed Prophet's wellbeing, as she continuously kept on asking:

"Is *he* all right?"

She eventually got the reply she was hoping for, from the incoming Companions:

"Yes. *Alhamdulillah* he is alive and well!"

But Sumayra ﷺ was little contented.

"Show him to me so my heart rests at ease", she implored. When they did, she rushed to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, and holding him by the edge of his shirt, exclaimed:

"May my parents be sacrificed for you, Messenger of Allah… I have nothing to worry about so long as you're alive!" (Waqidi, I, 292; Haythami, VI, 115)

Recounting the following is Bashir ibn Aqrabah ﷺ:

"Upon finding out that my father Aqrabah was martyred at Uhud, (still a child) I went to the Messenger of Allah, in tears. 'Why do you cry my dear?' he said. 'Would not you want me as your father and Aisha as your mother?'

'May my parents be sacrificed for you, Messenger of Allah; of course I would', I replied. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ caressed my head. And to this day, even though my hair has become all gray, the spot touched by the Messenger of Allah still remains black." (Bukhari, at-Tarikh'ul-Kabir, II, 78; Ali al-Muttaqi, XIII, 298/36862)

Another scene bearing out the Companions' thrill of prospective martyrdom is given below by Jabir ﷺ:

"The night before Uhud, my father called me next to him and said, 'I have a feeling I might just be the first martyr, tomorrow, among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. Apart from the Messenger of Allah, you are the dearest person I will be leaving behind in this life. I have debts; pay them off. Always treat you siblings with great care!'

As it turned out, my father was indeed the first to be martyred at Uhud. I placed him in a grave with another martyr. Later on, I wanted to bury him in a separate place. So six months later, I unearthed him; and behold, his entire body, except for a portion of his ear, was in the same condition as I had placed him. I went ahead and place him in a separate grave." (Bukhari, Janaiz, 78)

Once, when the martyrs of Uhud were mentioned, in underlining the ranks of those gallant martyrs the Blessed Prophet ﷺ remarked:

"By Allah, how I also would have loved to have fallen martyr and spent each night beneath Mount Uhud!" (Ahmad, III, 375)

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, during another of his visits to the martyrs of Uhud, avowed:

"I am witness to their *iman* and integrity!"

"Are not we their brothers, Messenger of Allah?" asked Abu Bakr ؓ. "We became Muslim, just the way they did, and undertook *jihad*, in the same manner as them."

"That is true", replied the Blessed Prophet, "but I do not know of the kind of innovations you might produce after me."

Abu Bakr ؓ grieved and cried at length, asking, "So we are still to remain after you?" (Muwatta, Jihad, 32)

Abu Bakr's ؓ concern testifies to his intense love for the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and shows why he has been labeled by the Holy Quran as 'the second of the two, the third of who is Allah'.

The Companions loved the Blessed Prophet ﷺ more than anyone else, including themselves. While, say, sitting at home and they suddenly began to think about the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, they would no longer be able to remain there; the place would feel too constricted. Instead, they would immediately get up and rush to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in order to find satisfaction in his beautiful presence, and peace in his talk.[412] Given they could not see him, they could hardly be contained. The fear of falling distant from him in Paradise was more than enough to make them pale and

412. Kastallani, II, 104.

take their consciousness away.[413] In fact, all Rabia ﷺ could wish for, when insisted by the Blessed Prophet to ask something from him, was the wish to be with him in Paradise.[414] In their final moments, the Companions used to feel an enormous satisfaction to be reuniting with the Blessed Prophet.[415] Such was the reason that their greatest reason for joy, second only to Islam, was the *hadith*, "One is with whom he loves."[416]

Sixty *ayat* of Al-i Imran are about the Battle of Uhud. When asked by Miswar ibn Mahramah to recap the Battle, Abdurrahman ibn Awf ﷺ, replied:

"Recite from the 120th ayah of Al-i Imran onward and it will be as if you were with us at Uhud!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 58; Waqidi, I, 319)

We Love Uhud and Uhud Loves Us

Uhud occupied a special place in the heart of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Throughout his remaining years, he frequently visited both Uhud and the martyrs buried there, commenting, from time to time:

"We love Uhud and Uhud loves us!" (Bukhari, Jihad, 71; Muslim, Hajj, 504)

Consecrated with these words of compliment by the Noble Messenger ﷺ, soaked up with the Prophet's ﷺ love, Uhud, the haven of martyrs, has gained prominence as a generous and vivid exhibition of the memories of the Battle, for the entire *ummah* to come until the Final Hour.

It was because of a wariness that Uhud might come to be regarded a place of bad luck among Muslims as a result of the Battle and perhaps to thwart feelings of enmity for Uhud before they ever developed that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ expressed his love for the place by saying, 'we love Uhud and Uhud loves us.' Thanks to the grace of the Prophet's love, Uhud has not been considered a site of defeat, but a shrine boasting in its depths the living corpses of the celebrated heroes of Uhud.

On the other hand, that Uhud recognizes and loves the Blessed Prophet ﷺ provides clear evidence in support of the fact that the entire creation, in fact, knows and affirms his prophethood. The Noble Messenger ﷺ has in fact stated:

413. Qurtubi, V, 271.
414. Muslim, Salat, 226; Ahmad, III, 500.
415. Ahmad, I, 8; Ibn Majah, Janaiz, 4.
416. Bukhari, Adab, 96.

"Except for the rebellious among the *jinn* and humans, everything between the earth and the skies knows that I am the Messenger of Allah." (Ahmad, III, 310)

Lessons of Wisdom to be drawn from the Battle of Uhud

An enormous level of maturity was demanded from the Believers during the Battle of Uhud, in responding prudently to the tremendous agony they were made to experience after the momentum shifted to the side of Quraysh. Once their brilliant initial display of trust in Allah, commitment and patience dwindled away in a moment's lapse and a love of the world, the Believers were forced to undergo painful and bitter experiences.

Neglect in properly carrying out the command of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ changed the destiny of the Battle in the blink of an eye; victory was suspended, making way for clear manifestations of Divine warning. The entire Believers paid the price for the mistake of a few, finding themselves amid an almost irreversible routing. Such is *sunnatullah*, or the Law of Allah. That His Beloved Messenger was among the Believers could do little to alter it.

Yet, the Companions were in a state of unconditional obedience to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ as confirmed by their words of trust: "We have believed you, Messenger of Allah…we have sincere faith in the truth of the Quran that you have brought, and we vow to obey and follow you. Do as you wish; just command us and we will be by your side. For the sake of the One who has sent you, even if you were to plunge into sea, we will follow and not even a single one of us will lag behind!" (Ibn Hisham, II, 253-254). This was the peak of sincere enthusiasm.

The Divine tribulation at Uhud carried the impetus of sending out a warning to the Believers, over their momentary ignorance regarding certain sensitive and significant responsibilities.

One of the greatest wisdoms underlying the ordeal of Uhud was to cleanse the Believers of the hypocrites that had mixed into their ranks.

Equally, Uhud instilled the idolaters of Quraysh a false sense of a victory that was to carry no practical import, and thus reduced them to a state of immobility. The false victory toned down the hate and anger that had accumulated in the hearts of idolaters since their defeat at Badr, gradually reducing, over time, their coldness towards Islam.

It is striking to see the Companions, from their youngest to their eldest, virtually compete with each other to participate in the Battle and fall martyr. Fifteen year old kids were resorting to all means possible just to be part of the Prophet's ﷺ army. The secret behind them running to death lay in the fullness of their hearts with *iman*

and their deep love for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the reason for the existence of the universe. Whenever *iman* unites with love, there is to be found all kinds of otherwise unthinkable feats of bravery; and wherever that unity is nowhere to be found, there arises laziness, indecision and fear. The way to enhancing this love is to increase *dhikr*, and *salawat* for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, to contemplate the blessings of the Allah, glory unto Him, and to engage in a struggle to wholeheartedly adopt the ways of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

That the Light of Being ﷺ was wounded at Uhud, which lead to the circulation of the rumor that he had been martyred, carries a fundamental lesson for the Believers. They were subjected to a test of *iman* and will. Their hearts were effectively prepared, from beforehand, for the truth that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, too, was after all a human being who was to return to the presence of his Lord when the time came, and that they needed to stick to the path shown by him and not turn back on their heels after his passing away.

Abounding in such meaning laden lessons, the Battle of Uhud also taught the road to triumph, and the way to avert the danger of disorder and defeat.

Hamra'ul-Asad (8 Shawwal, 3 / 24 March 625)

The idolaters had immediately set out on the road back to Mecca, trembling with a fear cast into their hearts that did not allow them to even think twice about returning home. Coming to their senses on the way, however, the idolaters begun feeling somewhat resentful at not having finished off the Believers. So they decided to return for a second onslaught.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who had in the meantime arrived at Medina, felt a similar need to intimidate the idolaters, at the exact time in which the Almighty revealed the *ayah* advising against being lax in relation.

وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ وَكَانَ اللهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا.

"And slacken not in following up the enemy: If you are suffering hardships, they are suffering similar hardships; but you have Hope from Allah, while they have none. And Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom." (an-Nisa, 104)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ asked for volunteers, among his Companions, willing to take on the task of pursuing the enemy. Without further ado, a unit which included Abu Bakr and Zubayr ﷺ in its ranks, was prepared. Nearly all the Companions taking part in the pursuit were carrying the fresh wounds of Uhud. Gearing up

nonetheless, the wounded Companions joined the Prophet's ﷺ troops near the Abu Inabah Well.[417]

Even Usayd ibn Khudayr ﷺ, busy with treating the wounded at the time, dropped what he was doing, grabbed his weapons and made his way to join the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Getting ready without wasting any time was also Saad ibn Ubadah ﷺ, who ordered his clan to follow suit.[418]

Commanded by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself, the unit then immediately followed the trail of the enemy.

Abdullah ibn Sahl and his brother Rafi ﷺ had fought alongside the Prophet of Allah ﷺ at Uhud and had returned to Medina wounded. Upon hearing the Noble Messenger's ﷺ call for pursuing the enemy, they exclaimed:

"By Allah, we do not have anything to ride and we carry serious wounds. But how can we ever miss out on a campaign led by the Messenger of Allah?" They thus set out, at times helping each other walk, and at others, taking turns in carrying each other on their backs. They ultimately made it next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, unable to bear the thought of leaving him on his own.[419]

The Believers who showed such sacrifice received the following Divine compliments:

لَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُواْ لِلّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ
الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُواْ مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَواْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Of those who answered the call of Allah and the Messenger, even after being wounded, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward." (Al-i Imran, 172)

The unit advanced until reaching a place called Hamra'ul-Asad, around eight kilometers away from Medina. The flag was in the hands of Ali ﷺ. At night, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ordered bonfires to be started in five hundred separate places. The sight was spectacular. To onlookers, it appeared as if an enormous army had encamped in the area. In fact, a man by the name of Mabad, still not a Muslim at the time, happened to see the Muslim fires on his way to Mecca. A while later, he encountered the idolaters, hurriedly informing them they were under close Muslim pursuit.

417. Waqidi, I, 334-335.
418. Waqidi, I, 334-335.
419. Ibn Hisham, III, 53.

"I have never, ever seen such a massive army", he said to them, to draw emphasis to the colossal size in which they appeared from a distance. The news was more than enough for their hearts to give in to fear once more.

"The Muslims did not have enough power to even move their fingers; so how can that be?" they began asking each other, staggered. Then, for some unknown reason, they unanimously decided to, "…leave before disaster strikes!"

Unable to face upto the prospect of fighting the Believers once again, they moved their pace up another notch as they swiftly made their way back home. Finding out about their retreat, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, too, led his Companions back to Medina.[420]

The Question of Inheritance

Certain *ayat* had in the meantime been revealed concerning the issue of inheritance, as some confusion had emerged following Uhud. Following the martyring of Saad ibn Rabi ﷺ at Uhud, in accordance with the practice common to the Age of Ignorance, his brother seized all of whatever remained of his wealth, without leaving anything to Saad's two daughters. Considered of little worth during the time of Ignorance, females were not given rights over inheritance; an unjust practice put an end to by Islam:

يُوصِيكُمُ اللهُ فِى أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ فَإِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِى بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ آبَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا.

"Allah enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; then if they are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what the deceased has left, and if there is one, she shall have the half; and as for his parents, each of them shall have the sixth of what he has left if he has a child, but if he has no child and (only) his two parents inherit him, then his mother

420. Ibn Hisham, III, 52-56; Waqidi, I, 334-340.

shall have the third; but if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the sixth after (the payment of) a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt; your parents and your children, you know not which of them is the nearer to you in usefulness; this is an ordinance from Allah: Surely Allah is Knowing, Wise." (an-Nisa, 11)

Thus the first ever distribution of inheritance in Islam was made between the inheritors of Saad ibn Rabi ﷺ.[421]

The Islamic law of inheritance seeks a just balance between the allotted shares and the responsibilities of the inheritor. Men, who, come under heavier financial responsibilities, ranging from the wedding expenses and the payment of *mihr* to supporting the family economically thereafter, have thus been allotted a greater share than women. In other words, the difference between males and females existent within the considerations of Islamic law are strictly consequent upon their difference of duties and responsibilities. Owing to their role of keeping an eye over the young and the connected need of taking care of the children and the family, women are exempt from supporting the family financially. For that reason, their share of inheritance is half of that of men. Behind the share of inheritance women receive is a consideration of what personal needs they may have; like supporting unmarried or divorced women in making their ends meet.

Women have been furthermore blessed with a depth of feeling, sensitivity, mercy and self-sacrifice, ideal for nurturing children and taking the family under their wings of compassion. Being delicate by nature, with refined feelings of sensitivity and boasting an almost bottomless depth of mercy, women may therefore tend to give way to physical and mental weakness when encountered by the surprises life tends to offer. Only for such reason does a woman, in Islam, hold the status of 'half a witness'. Those who see this as an excuse to attack Islam are simply unable to see, either from their thick veil of malice or from crass ignorance, the perfection in this principle that has its incentive in a few very important and unalterable considerations pertaining to human disposition.

The truth is that Allah, glory unto Him, has created each being, including each and every particle of that being, for a purpose, in line with which He has endowed it with a suitable physical and spiritual structure. Placing man under the obligation of providing for the family, in order for them to see to that task in a manner most befitting, the Almighty has generally fashioned men with greater physical strength and spiritual fortitude. Women, on the other hand, have been entrusted with the duty of protecting the children, raising and safeguarding them and seeing to their needs when they are in their weakest and most vulnerable state. Their specific duties have required their souls, not their bodies, to be endowed with deeper feelings of sensitivity. Such that, in order to embrace and nurture children with a profound love and

421. Ahmad, III, 352, 375.

compassion during their most vulnerable phases, as a Divine gift, women are given refined emotions of sensitivity. Only a negative outcome will emerge if the mother, a virtual fount of mercy through her precious configuration, is burdened with a task beyond her power and reason of creation.

Owing to these considerations, it could also be stated that there is a higher probability of a female misleading justice, by showing excess sympathy for the culprit. This is the exact wisdom lying beneath the Divine decree, which holds the testimonies of two female witnesses to count as one.

On the other hand, Islam regulates the process of testifying before law in close accordance with the psychological structures of human beings. For instance, the testimony of women alone is considered sufficient in specific circumstances involving incidents impossible for males to witness.[422]

Those who use the question of the testimony of women as a pretext to indict Islam with holding a lower opinion of women, either fail to understand or do not even wish to understand that Islam, by virtue of taking into consideration the unchangeable predispositional nature of human beings, as well as the entire community, in establishing a balance of justice between rights and responsibilities, could never be further remote from such unfounded allegations.

Femininity is perfected through the protection and promotion of the wonderful capacities women have been given by the Almighty. If a woman directs her natural capabilities in the opposite direction of Divine resolve and bids farewell to her own reality, she will end up squandering all her worth, and in consequence will lose her inner peace, falling into despondency and misery. Worse still, the sanctuary that is the family will become derelict, and the fiber of society, in turn, will wither away.

Our age has seen the commencing of an artificial and unjust race for equality between men and women. In total defiance of the natural characteristics of women, the race strikes a major blow directly at the heart of the feminine qualities of women, including motherhood, and is consequently detrimental to the family institution. The unfortunately common contemporary practice of abortion, which is an upshot of this race, is the modern version of the practice of burying the female children alive so common in the Age of Ignorance. A mere difference of clothing is the only thing that separates the fatigued and lethargic women of our times from those of the Age of Ignorance. Without a doubt, this is a social catastrophe brought on by a spiritless, materialistic education.

422. *Mecelle*, article. 1685.

THE FOURTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

The Raji Incident (Safar, 4 / July, 625)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to send teachers to neighboring tribes for the purpose of communicating and teaching Islam. Some of these teachers, however, became subjected to callous plots of betrayal. One of the most tragic of these is known as the Raji Incident.

The nearby Adal and Qara tribes had asked the Noble Messenger ﷺ for some knowledgeable Companions to teach them Islam. As a result, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ sent a delegate of ten Companions lead by Asim ibn Thabit ؓ.

The envoy reached the place called Hudat, between Usfan and Mecca, and took a break by the Raji Well, which was at the time within the dominion of the Huzayl Tribe. Meanwhile, having been informed that the Muslim envoy had reached the area, the Lihyan Clan of the Huzayl Tribe, mobilized nearly a hundred archers and went in pursuit of the Companions. Realizing they were being pursued, Asim and the Companions took refuge in relatively high spot nearby, where they were subsequently surrounded.

"Come down from there. Drop your weapons and surrender. We assure you that none of you will be hurt!" they shouted from below.

"I will not come down relying on the word of an infidel!" said Asim, afterward praying, "O my Lord! Inform of our plight to the Messenger of Allah!"

The archers then showered Asim and the six Companions who remained with him, in arrows, martyring them all. Fatally wounded, Asim ؓ prayed:

"Allah…Protect my corpse at sundown, just as I protected Your religion at sunup!"

After being informed of the martyring of Asim, some notables of Quraysh sent a few men to sever and return with a certain part of him that would assure them of his identity, in vengeance for a certain idolater Asim had killed on the field of Badr. But Allah, glory unto Him, sent a mass of bees to protect Asim's corpse, and the idolaters could not even get within an arms length of his body, frustrated by a cloud of bees relentlessly hovering over it. (Bukhari, Jihad, 170; Maghazi, 10, 28; Waqidi, I, 354-363)

Waiting nonetheless until sundown for the bees to disperse, the idolaters were met with something they had least expected: a downpour of rain. The subsequent

flood that swept across the valley took Asim's corpse with it, out of sight. The idolaters thus could not even find a moment's opportunity to obtain a piece of Asim's corpse. Asim ﷺ was thereafter referred to as 'the Martyr Protected by Bees.' (Ibn Hisham, III, 163)

The three Companions, who removed the strings of their bows and came down from the hill to surrender, soon realized that their foes had no intention of keeping their words, when they made a move to tie them down by force. One of the three Companions then attempted to put up a fight, exclaiming, "Never have we been betrayed in such manner…By Allah, I will never surrender. The martyrs lying over there are a perfect example for me!" Though the enemy nevertheless wanted to drag him behind them, he violently resisted, and was consequently martyred.

Of the ten Companions only Hubayb and Zayd ﷺ now remained. The Lihyan Clan took the two to Mecca and sold them to Quraysh. Hubayb ﷺ was purchased by the sons of Harith ibn Amir, whom he had put to the sword at Badr. Until the day they eventually decided to execute him, Hubayb ﷺ remained prisoner in their hands.

A woman from the household of the sons of Amir later testified to "…never before seeing a captive with greater virtue than Hubayb. I swear, I saw him eat fresh grapes, despite the fact that his hands were tied, and moreover on a day when nobody could find any fruits in Mecca. In hindsight, I now realize they were the blessings of Allah. Hubayb would recite the Quran and wake up for the *tahajjud* salat in the dark of night. Those who would hear him recite the Quran would soon begin to cry from bursting emotion. I once asked him whether he needed anything. 'Nothing', he said, 'except for you to offer me fresh water, to withhold from me the meat of stock you slaughter in the name of your idols and to inform me of the time they will have me executed.'

After the Months of Truce came to an end, I went to Hubayb to inform him that they had decided to execute him. But, I swear, I did not see a trace of fear or anxiety. When Harith's sons took him up to the spot outside of the vicinity of the *Haram* to execute him, Hubayb asked them to allow him for two *rakah*s of salat. They agreed. After offering the salat, Hubayb turned around and said, 'By Allah, had I known that you would not be led into thinking I feared death, I would have surely performed this salat more lengthily!' Hubayb ﷺ thus became the first to initiate two *rakah*s of salat for Muslims awaiting execution.

Hubayb then prayed, 'Allah…Destroy all of them! Take each of their lives one by one…do not let a single one of them survive!'[423] He then recited the following piece of poetry:

423. As Hubayb prayed, fear took hold of everyone present. To protect themselves from the affect of the prayer, they began running to and fro in search of somewhere to hide, thinking they would not survive the blight of the prayer. Even for over a month following the execution, Hubayb's prayer re-

'So long as I die a Muslim, how I died, I could never care! This is all in the way of Allah, of that I am aware; for Whom is easy to grant me His Forgiveness, despite my body, scattered and bare!'

He then added one final prayer, pleading, 'O my Lord! The only faces I can see here are those of the enemy! There is nobody around whom I can send to the Messenger of Allah, either. You deliver my greetings of peace to Him!'

Sitting with his Companions in Medina at the time, the Blessed Prophet r, said, in an audible tone وَعَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ meaning, 'Peace be upon him, too'.

'To whom did you just return the greetings, Messenger of Allah?' the astonished Companions wondered.

'To your brother Hubayb', answered the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. 'There…Jibril has delivered his greetings of peace!' The Noble Messenger ﷺ thereby informed his Companions, on the spot, of the martyring of Hubayb ﷺ.'" (Bukhari, Jihad, 170; Maghazi, 10, 28; Waqidi, I, 354-363)

Minutes before his execution, Hubayb was asked, "Would you have liked the Prophet to be in your place in return for your life?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Hubayb, with a voice echoing a colossal courage and dignity, declared:

"Never…! I could not even bare the thought of him being spiked by a thorn in his foot in Medina, let alone hoping him to be in my place right now!"

Stunned with the response, Abu Sufyan could not help but confess, "I swear, I have never seen another person who is loved by his friends more than Muhammad!" (Waqidi, I, 360; Ibn Sad, II, 56)

When they were about to hang him, they turned his face towards Medina. Hubayb ﷺ then prayed, "O my Lord! If what I am going through is something of worth in Your Sight, then turn my face towards your *qibla*!" Allah, glory unto Him, accepted his prayer and turned his face towards his desired direction. No matter how much the idolaters tried in turning him back towards Medina, they were unsuccessful. The below *ayah* of the Quran were revealed in reference to this illustrious Companion:

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mained the major talking point among Quraysh. Said ibn Amir, reportedly, began to pass out, from time to time, whenever reminded of the prayer. During his days as caliph, Omar ﷺ heard about Said's condition and asked him whether he was suffering from any illness. "From no illness do I suffer", said Said; "except I was present during Hubayb's execution and happened to hear his prayer. And by Allah, whenever I hark back on it, I suddenly begin to lose all consciousness!" (Waqidi, I, 359-360)

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. اِرْجِعِى إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً.
فَادْخُلِى فِى عِبَادِى. وَادْخُلِى جَنَّتِى.

"O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants. And enter into My garden." (al-Fajr, 27-30) (Qurtubi, XX, 58; Alusi, XXX, 133)

Martyred following Hubayb ﷺ, Zayd ﷺ was also in the same state of fortitude granted him by *iman*. During his days of captivity, he would make sure to wake up for the *tahajjud* salat and spend his days fasting. He would not touch the food offered him with meat, for being of stock slaughtered in the name of the idols. He preferred milk instead. On milk he would fast and with milk he would break it. He saw Hubayb on the way to Tanim, the place he was to be martyred, where the two Companions advised each other with patience. Zayd ﷺ, too, offered two *rakah*s of salat before being hanged. Like Hubayb ﷺ, he too was met with the question whether he would have wanted the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to be in his place instead, to which he responded in a similar manner as Hubayb ﷺ. (Waqidi, I, 361-362)

"Dying as a Muslim is preferable to living a thousand lives as idolater", were the final words he posed the idolaters who promised him freedom on the condition that he would recant his faith. And in a dignity worthy of a Believer, he sipped from the goblet of martyrdom with pleasure.

The Maunah Well Incident (Safar, 4 / July, 625)

During the same days as the Raji Incident, Abu Bara, a notable of the region of Najd, requested from the Noble Prophet ﷺ some Companions to teach them Islam. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not want to comply with the request, saying, 'I fear my friends might come under the betrayal of the people of Najd!'

Abu Bara then pledged on behalf of his tribe that the Companions would in no way be harmed. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ further had a declaration written, which was sent to Abu Bara's nephew Amir, governing the tribes of Najd in his uncle's absence. Afterward, the Noble Messenger ﷺ designated a group of seventy Companions from the *Suffa* known as the *Qurra* and sent them with Abu Bara.

But when the envoy reached the Maunah Well, four stations away from Medina, they encountered a horrific betrayal. Amir, Abu Bara's nephew, made a raid with a crowded army, without even having read the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ letter. But when

his tribe proved too hesitant to attack the Companions upon finding out that Abu Bara had declared his protection over them, Amir nonetheless lured the tribes of Usayya, Ri'l, Zakwan and Banu Lihyan into putting the Companions to the sword. Only Amr ibn Umayya was able to survive the massacre.[424]

Jabbar ibn Sulma, among the assailants during this tragic event, explains the following:

"I thrusted my spear into Amir ibn Fuhayrah who just moments before had invited me to Islam. I could see the blade of my spear come out from the other side of his chest. But still, he was jubilantly shouting, 'By Allah, I have won!'

'What could he have won?' I asked myself. It was me, after all, who had killed him. In the meantime, his corpse ascended into the skies and disappeared from sight. What I saw then made me become a Muslim." (Ibn Hisham, III, 187; Waqidi, I, 349)

Jibril ﷺ was the first to inform the Prophet of Allah ﷺ that the envoy of Companions were now reunited their Lord as martyrs; that their Lord was pleased with them and had also made them pleased.[425]

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ became grief-stricken upon hearing this devastating incident. Lifting his hands aloft to the gates of the Divine, for a month after each *fajr* salat, he prayed, "O my Lord! Curse the tribes of Ril, Zakvan and Usayya who have rebelled against Allah and His Messenger!" (Bukhari, Jihad, 9, 19; Maghazi, 28; Muslim, Masajid, 297)

The tears of grief shed by the Believers were countered by the joyous frenzy of the hypocrites and Jews, who seemed more than content with what had unfolded since Uhud. Besides, their frustration over not having capitalized in the aftermath of Uhud and claimed ascendancy over the Muslims meant they were now giving full vent to their anti-Muslim malice. The hypocrites, especially, had begun glamorizing their betrayal of the Believers on the way to Uhud as a clever move, rebuking the Muslims, who had given many casualties during the Battle, with the smug comments:

"Had those who died listened to us in the first place, they would not have died." The Quran's response was stern:

اَلَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ
فَادْرَؤُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

424. Ibn Hisham, III, 184; Haythami, VI, 125-130.
425. Bukhari, Jihad, 9.

"Those who said of their brethren whilst they (themselves) held back: Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed. Say: Then avert death from yourselves if you speak the truth." (Al'i Imran, 168)

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللهِ كِتَابًا مُؤَجَّلا

"And a soul will not die but with the permission of Allah the term is fixed…" (Al'i Imran, 145)

"I have never seen the Messenger of Allah ﷺ grieve more over anything than the martyrs of the Maunah Well", Anas ﷺ later said (Muslim, Masajid, 302). The martyrs of the Maunah Well massacre were entirely of the *Suffa*, devoted teachers of the Quran and Sunnah who were reared under the spiritual training of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

The Raji and Maunah Well incidents attest to the importance, for Muslims, of the duty of communicating Islam and offering guidance. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ chose the most elite of his Companions as teachers of Islam, despite the perils that would come with it. Allah, glory unto Him, has praised the eminent Companions who were martyred in this cause, declaring His satisfaction with them, and in turn, their satisfaction with their Lord.[426]

Banu Nadir's Treacherous Plot

Able to survive the Maunah Well massacre, Amir ibn Umayyah ﷺ killed two people from the tribe that attacked them, in their sleep, whom he happened to stumble upon on his way back to Medina. But little did he know at the time that the two were under the amnesty of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and were in fact returning from Medina. A part of the blood money that had to be paid in compensation, according to their prior pact, had to be provided by Banu Nadir; and to obtain part of the due payment, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, accompanied by a group of Companions, went to their quarters.

The fact that the Noble Messenger ﷺ was visiting them with only a handful of Companions, thought the Jews of Banu Nadir, was a golden opportunity; so they swiftly plotted a plan of assassination. Telling the Blessed Prophet ﷺ they were more than happy to recompense the amount of blood money that fell to their lot, they invited him to sit under a shade while they prepared the money and, at the same time, a few treats. At the same time, they made a fast but stealthy move to get their plot under way. They were supposedly to throw a massive rock from the roof of the house, under the shade of which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was sitting, and thereby take

426. Bukhari, Maghazi 28, Jihad 9; Muslim, Masajid, 297.

his life. They did, after all, have plenty of experience under their belts, from having perpetrated similar crimes against many prophets before.

In the meantime, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ quickly got up from where he was sitting and hurriedly moved away from and out of the quarters. Allah, glory unto Him, had informed His Messenger of the plot and protected him, a blessing upon Muslims of which He reminds in the following *ayah*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ
أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ وَعَلَى اللهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

"O you who believe! remember Allah's favor on you when a people had determined to stretch forth their hands towards you, but He withheld their hands from you, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and on Allah let the believers rely." (al-Maida, 11)

That the above *ayah* addresses the Believers in general, even though the assassination had only the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in mind, goes to show that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ is the life and soul of Muslims and that his life ought to be more precious than their own.

The Almighty revealed the following regarding the attempted assassination:

وَإِمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الخَائِنِينَ

"And if you fear treachery on the part of a people, then throw back to them on terms of equality; surely Allah does not love the treacherous." (al-Anfal, 58)

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ.
وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللهُ هُوَ الَّذِيَ أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing. And if they intend to deceive you- then surely Allah is sufficient for you; He it is Who strengthened you with His help and with the Believers." (al-Anfal, 61-62)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon sent an ambassador to Banu Nadir telling them to either renew their pact or pack up and leave Medina within ten days. Unable to keep still, the hypocrites, in the meantime, sent Banu Nadir, who had now gotten their preparations to leave Medina under way, the message that they ought not to

leave the town and assured the Jews that they would help them in masses should the Muslims threaten their existence. The secret correspondence between the Jews and the hypocrites was exposed by the Almighty in the Quran:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ.

"Have you not seen those who have become hypocrites? They say to those of their brethren who disbelieve from among the followers of the Book: If you are driven forth, we shall certainly go forth with you, and we will never obey any one concerning you, and if you are fought against, we will certainly help you, and Allah bears witness that they are most surely liars." (al-Hashr, 11)

For, in spite of all the traps they were secretly setting behind Muslim backs, deep down, they were terrified of the Believers; a state of mind illustrated by the Quran:

لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنَ اللهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ

"You are certainly greater in being feared in their hearts than Allah; that is because they are a people who do not understand." (al-Hashr, 13)

After Banu Nadir had a change of heart and decided to hold their ground after all, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was left with no other option than to lay siege to their quarters. Banu Qurayza, the other Jewish tribe of Medina, came to the aid of the besieged Banu Nadir, at the expense of violating their own pact with the Muslims.[427]

The Jews, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ saw, were making full use of their homes in their fight; ascending their rooftops to show resistance and taking refuge behind their houses during their retreat. Thus, beginning with the most nearby house, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ commanded the demolishing of each Jewish house and the chopping or burning down of some of their date trees.

"You were forbidding mischief and reproaching mischief makers, Muhammad!" the Jews begun to shout behind their homes. "And now you chop and burn down trees?" This was cause for anxiety for some Muslims, as they suddenly felt a hesitancy coming over them. Then the Almighty removed all doubts:

427. Bukhari, Maghazi, 14.

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ لِّينَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَى أُصُولِهَا
فَبِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

"Whatever palm-tree you cut down or leave standing upon its roots, It is by Allah's command, and that He may abase the transgressors." (al-Hashr, 5)[428] The *ayah* also hinted at the need to be wary of the mind games of Jews.

After a nearly twenty day siege, consequent upon the immaculate strategy carried out by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the promised aid of the hypocrites that never came, Banu Nadir surrendered and were subsequently expelled from Medina by the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Banu Qurayza, on the other hand, for acquiescing in a renewed pact, was allowed to remain in the town.[429]

Before their migration, Banu Nadir razed to the ground with their own hands what remained of their houses, so that the Muslims could not seize possession of them. Some then ultimately relocated to Khaybar, while others headed to the direction of Syria.[430]

Allah, glory unto Him, pronounces His backing and support of the Believers in their fight against Banu Nadir, in the Quran as follows:

هُوَ الَّذِى أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ
مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَّانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِّنَ اللهِ فَأَتَيهُمُ اللهُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِى قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ
بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِى الْأَبْصَارِ

"He it is Who caused those who disbelieved of the followers of the Book to go forth from their homes at the first banishment you did not think that they would go forth, while they were certain that their fortresses would defend them against Allah; but Allah came to them whence they did not expect, and cast terror into their hearts; they demolished their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers; therefore take a lesson, O you who have eyes!" (al-Hashr, 2)

For having been acquired without the use of force, properties left behind by Banu Nadir were called *fay'*, and were given a status different from spoils acquired through the use of force:

428. Bukhari, Tafsir, 59/2; Ibn Hisham, III, 192.
429. Bukhari, Maghazi, 14; Muslim, Jihad, 62.
430. Ibn Hisham, III, 191-194; Waqidi, I, 363-380.

مَّا أَفَاءَ اللهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِى الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَىْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَيكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ إِنَّ اللهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ. لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ.

"Whatever Allah has restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Messenger, and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you, and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil). It is) for the poor who fled their homes and their possessions, seeking grace of Allah and (His) pleasure, and assisting Allah and His Messenger: these it is that are the truthful." (al-Hashr, 7-8)

The *fay'* reserved for Allah and His Messenger, as stated by the *ayah*, is for the repairing and renovation of Kaabah and other mosques. In any case the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to distribute the *fay'* that fell to his lot among the poor Companions. The wisdom beneath the distribution of the *fay'* in this specific manner is, as indicated by the *ayah*, to prevent wealth from circulating only among the rich and becoming stockpiled. The ethos of Islam in financial affairs requires the maintenance of mutual aid among members of society, to ensure both the rich and the poor receive their entitlements of benefits. This carried out to the end will bring about a just social balance that brings different spectrums of society together, where there will no longer exist groups that exploit one another.

For that reason, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ distributed the spoils of Banu Nadir among the *Muhajirun*, and withheld it from the *Ansar*, apart from three needy Companions from among them. Before the distribution, he addressed the *Ansar*:

"If you wish", he said, "what you previously provided the *Muhajirun* with will remain with them and you can receive a share of the spoils. But if you want, you can ask back what you gave them, and cede the entirety of these spoils to them."

The *Ansar* thereupon gave a magnificent and heart rending response, stating, "Neither will we ask back what we gave of our properties and houses, nor will we have anything to do with the spoils!"

The unrivalled instance of brotherhood displayed by the *Ansar* was among the reasons that occasioned the revelation of the below *ayah*:

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّؤُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

"And those who made their abode in the city and in the faith before them love those who have fled to them, and do not find in their hearts a need of what they are given, and prefer (them) before themselves though poverty may afflict them, and whoever is preserved from the avarice of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones." (al-Hashr, 9) (Razi, XXIX, 250; Qurtubi, XVIII, 25)

The Prohibition of Intoxicants and Gambling

The Divine verdicts on intoxicants and gambling, as known, were not given during the first years of Islam but, motivated with specific concerns, were delayed. The ban of intoxicants followed the below sequence:

1. In Mecca, the *ayah*,

وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ.

"And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes-- you obtain from them intoxication and good nourishment; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who ponder." (an-Nahl, 67) was revealed. The *ayah* explains how grapes and dates, apart from good nourishment**,** offer beverages of an intoxicating nature. This imparts a feeling that intoxicants are not counted among good sources of nourishment and therefore hints at their future prohibition. This was the only *ayah* revealed with regard to intoxicants during the Meccan period.

2. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was on the receiving end of many questions pertaining to these issues after the Hegira, with respect to which the Almighty declared:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهِمَا.

"They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit…" (al-Baqara, 219)

A majority of the Believers quit drinking intoxicants, while others continued regardless.

3. While leading the *maghrib* salat, an intoxicated Companion jumbled the words of an *ayah* to the point of distorting the meaning, which occasioned the following Revelation:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّى تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ

"O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are Intoxicated until you know (well) what you say…" (an-Nisa, 43)

The number of Muslim drinkers after the above Revelation diminished drastically. Still, before each salat, there would be a Companion who would call out, 'The intoxicated ought not to approach salat!' Muslims were nonetheless beginning to fully realize that it would only be a matter of time before the consumption of intoxicants would be prohibited for good and they were getting themselves prepared in regard.

4. An overwhelming majority of Muslims had now quit drinking. A few, on the other hand, were in distress over the unpleasant scenes fuelled by drunkenness they would more often than not encounter. Omar ﷺ, for instance, was praying for Allah, glory unto Him, to '…provide a clear and indisputable declaration regarding drinking!' A clash following a feast between a few Companions under the influence of alcohol, which left no room for doubting the benefit of a likely prohibition, provided the proper underpinning; a concrete reason for the ban to be instated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ
مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ. إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ
أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ.

"O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will you not then abstain?" (al-Maida, 90-91)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent for Omar ﷺ and recited to him the Revelation. When he came to reciting the part 'will you not then abstain…?' Omar ﷺ declared:

"Yes, we will abstain Allah; we will abstain!" The exact words reverberated among the entire Companions.

Following this Revelation, with the order of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, a Companion called out through the streets of Mecca, the news that:

"Intoxicants are forbidden from here on!"

Rivers of wine flowed through the streets of Medina from what poured out from the broken earthenware and the punctured leather bottles that once contained the now forbidden beverages.

Muslims, who once drank, were now fervently destroying all the stock of wine they had following this indisputable declaration. They were to never drink again. In further emphasis of the ban, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stated:

"Surely Allah has cursed intoxicants, he who prepares it and the place where it is prepared; its consumer and he who encourages its consumption; its carrier, seller, purchaser and he who lives off its revenue!" (Ahmad, I, 53; II, 351; Nasai, Ashribah, 1-2; Hakim, II, 305/3101)

Anas ﷺ recounts:

"Alcohol was forbidden just when I was serving people wine at Abu Talha's house. Upon the orders of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, a Companion spread the news around. We heard his voice while inside. Abu Talha told me to, 'Go outside to see what it is all about!' So I stepped outside and heard him announce that alcohol was henceforth forbidden. I told Abu Talha just what I heard. 'If that's the case', Abu Talha said, 'then go and pour that out!' Soon, wine was flowing through the streets of Medina." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 5/11)

The incident highlights the Companions' precision in adhering to the command of Allah, glory unto Him. Without putting forth any excuses or waiting for even a minute, they immediately spilled out what they had of intoxicants, enthusiastically seeking the pleasure of Allah, glory unto Him, by not only surrendering to the Divine Command, but also genuinely obeying it from the bottom of their hearts.

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ declares:

"All intoxicatants are impermissible. A little of what intoxicates when consumed more, is also impermissible." (Ibn Majah, Ashriba, 10; Nasai, Ashribah, 24, 48)

"Alcohol is the mother of all evil." (Ahmad, V, 238)

"He who believes in Allah and the Last Day ought not to sit down at a table that has intoxicants." (Tirmidhi, Adab, 43/2801)

"Certain people from among my *ummah* will drink alcohol by giving it different names." (Ahmad, IV, 237)

The gradual process, stemming from a concern for the *maslahah*, or common good, that we see implemented in the prohibition of the consumption of alcohol and gambling, provides a handy clue to the method Islam espouses in its call and struggle against iniquities. Even though Allah, glory unto Him, knows eternally and universally in an absolute manner when passing judgment in determining the rulings of Islam, He considers the capacities of human beings, the direct subjects of these rulings, and their levels of competence in accustoming themselves to them. Perhaps the most important manifestation of this can be found in the fact that the *ayat* pertaining to the creed of Islam were given precedence and revealed in the Meccan era, contrary to the general manner in which the sequence of the Quran is arranged today. Since the Quran existed in the *Lawh'ul-Mahfuz* prior to its revelation on Earth, it is not difficult to see that the specific concern underlying the precedence given to the revelation of some sections of the Quran over others is strictly *maslahah*, the benefit of Believers.

What this concern for the common good consists of is the observing of the aptitude and power human beings have in following the Quran and its development; just like how the obligations increase in tandem with the age of a child.

The principle of graduality, best implemented during the blissful time of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, is part of *sunnatullah*, the Way of Allah, underpinned with great wisdom of the Almighty, effectively a manifestation of His Mercy. Applicable at all times in communicating Islam, it is, at the same time, the most agreeable to human nature. Indeed, the initial thing one is required to do after entering Islam is to rectify his faith; only after that phase is digested does one then proceed to deeds. Graduality comes into play once again when carrying out the deeds, this time regulating them according to human capacity. Not only is this applicable in inviting people to Islam, but also in all other forms of teaching. Therefore, with the Divine Call that began with Adem عليه السلام, there has been an observable development in the Message –the fundamental articles of faith have of course remained the same-, parallel with the social development of humankind; a development that has culminated in the religion of Islam.

Dhat'ur-Riqah[431]

The Clans of Muharib and Salabah, of the Ghatafan tribe, joined forces to wage an attack on the Muslims, in response to which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ marched out to meet them with a force of four-hundred Companions.

Seeing the Believers right in front of them in the flesh, the enemy lost its nerve and retreated. Soon after, the Believers communally offered the *zuhr* salat, whose time had come. Observing the Believers from a distance until the completion of the salat, the enemy afterwards began bemoaning the missed opportunity of not having ambushed them during those minutes. One of the clansmen, however, consoled his comrades.

"Don't you worry," he assured. "Their upcoming salat of *asr* is dearer to them than their fathers and sons." They heeded and decided to wait until *asr* time.

Right at that moment, the Almighty sent Jibril عليه السلام with the below Revelation that was to ruin their plans of attack.

وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا
أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وَرَآئِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَآئِفَةٌ أُخْرَى لَمْ
يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ وَدَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً

"And when you are among them and keep up the prayer for them, let a party of them stand up with you, and let them take their arms; then when they have prostrated themselves let them go to your rear, and let another party who have not prayed come forward and pray with you, and let them take their precautions and their arms; (for) those who disbelieve desire that you may be careless of your arms and your luggage, so that they may then turn upon you with a sudden united attack, and there is no blame on you, if you are annoyed with rain or if you are sick, that you lay down your arms, and take your precautions; surely Allah has prepared a disgraceful chastisement for the unbelievers." (an-Nisa, 102) (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 4/3035)

This specific type of salat has come to be known as *salat'ul-khawf*, or of fear.[432] Jibril عليه السلام personally taught the Blessed Prophet ﷺ how to offer it. The *asr* salat, that

431. There are also reports that suggest that the campaign took place after Handak or Khaybar. We have, however, preferred to follow this sequence, in accordance with the opinions of the majority of scholars of the life and the times of the Prophet ﷺ.

432. The *salat'ul-khawf* or the salat of fear is where a group takes turns to perform a given salat behind a single *imam*, when threatened with a serious danger like an impending enemy attack. The first

day, was offered in this manner and the wait of the enemy, whose sole hopes had rested on those few moments of salat, proved futile. The campaign, which all up lasted fifteen days, concluded with the complete retreat of the terrified clansmen.[433]

The account given by Abu Musa al-Ashari ﷺ is in reference to the campaign. "We had set out on a campaign with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Six of us were taking turns in riding a camel. Our feet had become blistered from walking. So were mine; my nails had even fallen off. We were wrapping pieces of cloth around our feet and hence the name of the campaign, *Dhat'ur-Riqa*."

Abu Burdah, who narrated these words from Abu Musa ﷺ, then added, "After having explained all that, Abu Musa felt a sudden regret, saying, 'I did not do the right thing by telling you this', to express his remorse. What worried him was perhaps that he revealed a feat of bravery he had undergone for the sake of Allah only." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 31)

Neither poverty nor lack of opportunity prevented the Companions from fulfilling their duties and going on *jihad* in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. Regardless, they would be utterly sensitive not to expose even a clue of the hardships that they endured in the way of obeying the Almighty, unless it became really necessary in realizing a positive purpose, like providing a lesson for others or solace for the oppressed.

During the campaign, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ asked some water to take *wudu*. Yet, there was no water around. The Blessed Messenger ﷺ thereupon dipped his hands into a bucket with very little water at its base, after which each of his fingers miraculously turned into fonts springing forth plenty of water. The entire Companions were able to quench their thirst. The bucket, even after the Prophet of Allah ﷺ removed his hands from out of it, was still full with water.[434]

The Muslim army reached a wooded valley, around noon, while returning from the *Dhat'ur-Riqa* Campaign where the Blessed Prophet ﷺ decided to take a break.

group, which performs the first *rakah* of a two *rakah* salat, or the first two of a four *rakah* salat, leaves the salat to watch guard over the group, after the second *sajdah* –in a two *rakah* salat- or the first *qaadah* –in a four *rakah* salat. The second group in line then comes and completes the remainder of the *rakahs* of the salat behind the imam, after which they leave to take over the duty of keeping guard. The imam gives *salam* to end the salat, by himself. That is when the members first group return once again to complete their salat, without any *qiraah*, that is, recitation of the Quran, however, for they are considered as *lahiq*, i.e. a person who leaves the salat owing to an excuse although having joined the imam right at the start. After their completion, the members of the second group follow, who however, complete their salat with *qiraah*, as they are considered *masbuk*, i.e. a person who joins the imam after the first *rakah* of a given salat. Thereby, neither the salat, nor the duty is neglected. (Komisyon, *Diyânet İlmihâli,* I, 334; Hamdi Döndüren, *Delilleriyle İslâm İlmihâli*, p.377-378)

433. Ibn Hisham, III, 214-221; Ibn Saad, II, 61.

434. Bukhari, Wudu, 32; Manakib, 25; Muslim, Fadail, 5.

The Companions, too, went their own ways to take some rest under the cool shades of trees. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ had also withdrawn under a *samurah*, a densely leafed tree, hanging his sword on a branch. The Companions had just snoozed off when they heard the Prophet of Allah ﷺ call them. They immediately ran next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ where they saw a Bedouin standing next to him.

"This man took hold of my sword while I was sleeping", explained the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. "When I woke up, the sword was in his hand, removed from its scabbard. 'Who will save you from my hands now?' he asked; 'Allah!' I replied, three times." (Bukhari, Jihad, 84, 87; Muslim, Fadail, 13)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ did not resort to punishing the Bedouin who had attempted to take his life and instead invited him to Islam. Virtually melting at the face of this magnanimous behavior, upon returning to his tribesmen, the Bedouin could not help but say, "I have just returned from the best of mankind!" (Hakim, III, 31/4322)

On the return to Medina towards evening, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ decided on another stopover and asked for volunteers from among the Companions to keep watch while the others rested. Volunteering without giving it a second thought were Ammar ibn Yasir ؓ of the *Muhajirun*, and Abbad ibn Bishr ؓ of the *Ansar*. Abbad then asked Ammar which part of the night he preferred to stand and keep guard.

"The latter half of the night," said Ammar ؓ. He then lied down, falling asleep not long after. Abbad ؓ then began offering salat, which was when an idolater clandestinely approached from a distance; and noticing Abbad's shadow as he stood, shot an arrow which pierced through Abbad. But Abbad gathered his strength, removed the arrow and continued his salat regardless. This did nothing to dissuade the enemy archer, who shot a second, even a third arrow, both of which hit Abbad, who, each time, was standing his ground, removing the arrows as they struck him and continuing his salat from where had left off. Abbad then eventually bowed for *ruku*, went down for *sajdah* and completed his salat by giving *salam*. Only then did he inform his comrade:

"Wake up Ammar; I have been wounded", he said in a soft voice. Ammar woke up at the instant. The archer, sensing he was now noticed by the Companions, made tracks. But by now, Abbad lay heavily wounded.

"*Subhanallah*", exclaimed Ammar. "Why did you not wake me up when you were first shot?"

Poised, Abbad gave the following response, vividly elucidating his enthusiastic love for salat:

"I was reciting a *surah* of the Quran and I did not want to break my salat before having completed its recital. But when the arrows hit me one after another I stopped reciting and bowed to *ruqu*. But by Allah, had there not been a fear of losing this spot whose protection the Messenger of Allah ordered, I would have preferred death over cutting my recital of the *surah* short." (Abu Dawud, Taharat, 78/198; Ahmad, III, 344; Ibn Hisham, III, 219; Waqidi, I, 397)

Riding a frail camel, Jabir ؓ was continuously falling behind his friends during the return. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ went next to him to inquire why he was falling behind. As soon as Jabir ؓ explained the reason, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ gently poked the camel a few times with a stick. The camel picked up so great a pace that it even began going head to head with the Prophet's own camel.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then began talking to Jabir ؓ, finding out that he had just been married and was therefore burdened with some debt. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ then asked Jabir what he owned.

"Only a camel", replied Jabir ؓ. The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ then asked Jabir to sell his camel to him, as a means to help him pay off his debt. Jabir agreed, on the condition that the he was allowed to ride it until they reached Medina. After they stepped foot on Medinan soil, holding the camel by the halter, Jabir ؓ arrived at the door of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to hand over the camel. He was met, however, with a pleasant surprise. Not only did the Noble Messenger ﷺ pay the price of the camel he also returned it back to Jabir as present. (Bukhari, Jihad, 49; Buyu', 34; Muslim, Musaqat, 109)

Jabir ؓ himself recounts:

"While returning with the camel after the Messenger of Allah's ﷺ generous gesture, I saw a Jewish acquaintance of mine. I told him what had just happened. Astonished, the Jew kept on repeating, 'so he paid for the camel then returned it, ha?' I had to assure him each time." (Ahmad, III, 303)

So moved were the Believers after hearing the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ extreme act of benevolence, they remembered this night as *Laylat'ul-Bair*, the Night of the Camel.

The Battle of Badr Minor (Dhilqadah, 4/ April, 626)

Compliant with their verbal agreement just before they parted ways at Uhud, the Muslims and the idolaters were to meet again at Badr in a year's time to fight. Tentative yet feeling compelled to stand by his word, Abu Sufyan led an army of idolaters upto the point of Marr'uz-Zahran, where overcome with fear, he felt an equal compulsion to return to Mecca. Still, not wanting to swallow his pride, he sent an emissary to Medina, to inform the Believers that they had set out from Mecca

with a huge army. By scaring them, Abu Sufyan wanted to ensure that the Believers remained still in Medina and thereby return with a supposed upper hand.

Much to Abu Sufyan's despair however, by the time his emissary reached Medina, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had long completed his preparations for battle and had even commanded the Companions to set out. The emissary knew that, the terrified Abu Sufyan would have just about led the idolaters back to Mecca; he was thus doing all he could to frighten and thereby discourage the Believers from leaving. Coming up with unthinkable lies, he was claiming that meeting the idolaters at Badr would only spell a tragic end for the Believers. His efforts, aided by hypocrite propagations, did not entirely fall on deaf ears, as some Companions did begin to feel a little doubt come over their hearts whether setting out for battle was the right thing to do. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then declared:

"By Allah, in Whose Hand of Might my life resides, even if nobody follows me, I will go to Badr by myself!" Allah, glory unto Him, then aided the Believers by reinforcing their hearts. (Ibn Sad, II, 59; Waqidi, I, 386-387)

The Muslim Army ultimately reached Badr. There was not even trace of the enemy. There was only a little trade fair near the field. Thus, there was nothing left for the Muslims to do than to engage in some trade. Nonetheless, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Companions waited for eight days at Badr in case the enemy might show; though the situation remained unchanged, and the Believers returned to Medina with the profit they made from their trade at the fair.[435]

The courage and fortitude shown by the Believers on the occasion has been praised in the Quran in the following:

اَلَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ
إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ. فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللهِ
وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللهِ وَاللهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ

"Those unto whom men said: The people have gathered against you, therefore fear them. (The threat of danger) but increased the faith of them and they cried: Allah is Sufficient for us, and the Most Excellent Protector! So they returned with grace and favour from Allah, and no harm touched them. They followed the good pleasure of Allah, and Allah is of Infinite Bounty." (Al'i Imran, 173-174)

According to the report of Abdullah ibn Abbas ﷺ, it was Ibrahim ﷺ who originally said, 'Allah is Sufficient for us, and the Most Excellent Protector' right

435. Ibn Hisham, III, 221; Ibn Saad, II, 59; Waqidi, I, 384-389.

before being thrown into fire. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ repeated these words, when he was told that the idolaters had gathered against them in great numbers. The *iman* of the entire Companions had thereupon increased, as they repeated the words of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, displaying a perfect example of trust in the Almighty.[436]

436. See, Bukhari, Tafsir, 3/13.

THE FIFTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

Salman Farisi's Acceptance of Islam and His Being Granted Freedom

Salman Farisi, or the Persian, ﷺ, formerly a slave of a Medinan Jew, recounts to Ibn Abbas ﷺ his provoking journey that culminated in his entering the blessed haven of Islam:

"I used to live in Jayy, a village in Isfahan. My father was among the notables of our village. I was his most beloved in life. He loved me in excess; he would never leave me out of his sight. He used to always keep me at home, like a daughter, rarely allowing me out. So great was I caught up in Magean beliefs, the religion my father followed that I had even taken upon myself the duty of lighting and feeding the sacred fire at the temple. I would not allow the fire to smolder even for a moment.

My father also had a big farm. One day, as he was busy working on some construction, he said to me, 'Son, this work will keep me occupied all day, so I will not be able to go to the farm…best you go there today.' He then told me the things that needed to be carried out at the farm, adding, 'But do not hang around there more than is needed and have me worrying about your whereabouts; then I will not even be able to focus on what I need to finish here!'

So I set out towards the farm. On the way, I noticed a Christian church. I approached closer and heard some voices coming from inside. They sounded like they were praying. But then again I was not too sure as to what they were precisely doing, for my father had detained me at home nearly all my life. So I could never be certain as to what people exactly do inside a church. Curious, I entered the church to see for myself. I observed them for a while. At the end, I thought 'surely, their religion seems better than ours.' I did not leave the church until sundown. As for the farm, I never ended up going there. Wanting to find out more, I asked them where I could find their religion in a more authentic form.

'In Damascus', they replied. The sun had completely set by the time I returned home to my father, who, I soon became aware, had put all work aside and sent people to search for me. Upon seeing me, he exclaimed, 'Where were you? Did not I tell you what you were supposed to do?'

'I came upon certain people worshipping inside a church, dad', I began to explain. 'I was very much taken by what they were doing…so much that I barely noticed the sun had set by the time I left them!'

'There is nothing of benefit for you in their religion', he rebuked. 'What you have with you, which has come from your forefathers, is way better!'

Worried I might run away to them, my father then put shackles around my feet and locked me up inside the house. Nonetheless, through an acquaintance, I was able to send out a message to the men of the church, insisting them to 'inform me as soon as a trade caravan arrives from Damascus'. A while afterward I received the news that a Christian caravan heading to Damascus had arrived. I was somehow able to free myself of the iron shackles and run to the church, where I joined the Damascus bound caravan. Some time later, we reached Damascus.

There, I searched for the most knowledgeable scholar of the town. The locals directed me to a bishop in some church. I rushed to him the moment I found out. At the time, the bishop was outside the church.

'I want to enter this religion', I implored him. 'I wish to remain with you, provide my services to the church, learn Christianity from you and worship by your side.'

'Come inside!' he said.

I entered the church with him. My days there had now begun. In time, I found out for myself that the Bishop of Damascus was not a good man as many had thought. He would command the church comers to give charity for the poor, only to stockpile what he collected. I even noticed, one day, that he had hoarded a total of seven pots of gold and silver in charity. My anger was growing by the day. But soon, the bishop wound up dead. The church comers gathered to offer his final services. That was when I came clean with all the bishop's misdemeanors.

'He was an evil man', I told the onlookers. 'True, he used to encourage you to offer charity, but he always hoarded what you gave for his own pleasure and never gave even a dime to the poor!'

'How do you know that?' they asked suspiciously.

'I can show you where he kept his treasure hidden', I replied.

They took out exactly seven pots of gold and silver from the place I showed them.

'We will never bury him, we swear!' they shouted fumingly. They were true to their promise: they instead hung his corpse and stoned him. In his place, they brought another bishop. He was different. To this day, except those who offer their five daily salats, I do not remember ever seeing another person who had so little regard for the world, who desired the Hereafter and who worshipped day and night. Some time later, he too was in his deathbed, breathing his last few breaths. I said to

him, 'I have been with you all this time and have never loved anyone else as much as I have loved you. Now you see your time has come. What do you advise I do after you? Who shall I go to?'

'I know of nobody who follows the same path as I, my dear', he whispered. 'The righteous have all but died. Those who are alive have distorted the eternal truths of religion and abandoned most of them. But come to think of it, there is a man in Mosul, one the same path as I. You better go to him.'

After this venerable man passed away, I headed to Mosul and found his friend. He, too, then passed away, after which, at his request, I headed to Nusaybin and from there to Ammuriya (near Eskişehir). There, I even acquired a little wealth as well in the form of some cows and sheep. But ultimately, death came knocking on the door of the man at Ammuriya, too.

'Honestly, my dear, I cannot think of anyone on our path who I can recommend for you to go to after me…nobody who is on the same path as us. But the time of the Prophet of the Final Hour is near; I can sense his shade hovering above us. That prophet will be sent on the religion of Ibrahim ﷺ. He shall appear in the land of the Arabs and migrate to a town, with date fields, wedged amid two stony places. He will accept gifts but will not touch charity. He will carry the seal of prophethood between his shoulder blades. If you have the means to go those lands now, go; do not wait for a moment!'

Ultimately, he too passed away. The Will of Allah had me remain there for a little while longer. I then met some merchants from the Kalb Clan. I offered them my sheep and cows on the condition they take me with them to Arabia. They accepted and took me with them. But after we reached The Qura Valley, they betrayed me and sold me as slave to a Jew. I was made to remain with the Jew for a while. The Qura Valley was abundant with date trees, so I could not help but wonder whether I had arrived, after all, at the town which my master had described as the place of migration of the Prophet of the Final Hour. Yet, even though I had built up a glimmer of hope, my heart was never fully convinced.

Once, during my stay at the Qura Valley, the cousin of the Jew, who was of Banu Qurayza, purchased me and took me with him to Medina. By Allah, the moment I saw Medina I just knew, there and then, this was the town described by my master at Ammuriya. My heart now appeased, I began to wait for the Prophet of the Final Hour. Little was I aware at the time that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had long appeared and remained for years in Mecca. Engrossed in the duties that came with being a slave, however, I had not heard anything in relation. I even had no idea that he had even migrated to Medina.

One day, I was up a date tree, working on it, and seated under its shade was my master. Then his cousin came, yelling, 'Damn these Aws and Khazraj! They have gathered at the village of Quba around a man whom they call a prophet!'

I began trembling so violently upon hearing his words that I was nearly about to fall on my owner.

'What did you say? What did you say?' I repeatedly asked, as I quickly came down from the tree. Angered, however, my master hit me with a forceful slap and exclaimed, 'What is it to you? You worry about your own business!'

'Nothing to worry', I said. 'I only wanted to make sure I heard him correctly.'

Come evening, I was able to get away to Quba, to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, taking with me a few things to eat I had been storing. My first words to him were, 'I hear you are a righteous man and that you have needy friends with you. I have some food I have been storing for charity. When I heard about your situation, I thought it you might be in need of it more than me.' I thus offered what I had to the Messenger of Allah.

'Here, help yourselves', said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to his Companions and he did not even lay a finger on it. 'One down', I thought to myself. I then departed from his presence and returned to Medina. I again saved up some more things. Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had arrived in Medina. I went to him once more.

'I noticed you do not touch charity but this', I said, 'is a gift I have prepared for you.' This time, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ate from it and told his Companions to do likewise. 'Two down', I thought to myself.

Afterward, I visited the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who was at the Baqi'ul-Gharqad Cemetery at the time; the occasion being a funeral of a Companion. He was seated amid his Companions, wearing two shrouds that were completely covering him. I greeted him, before moving behind him, in hope of perhaps seeing the Seal of Prophethood described by my master at Ammuriya. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had sensed my intention; so he slightly slipped off his shroud from his back. I recognized the seal the instant I saw it! I fell over him; hugged him and began to cry.

'Come round this way', said the Messenger of Allah. So I moved around and took a seat in front of him."

Salman ﷺ then paused and said to Ibn Abbas ﷺ:

"I then explained to the Messenger of Allah all that I had undergone, just in the same manner I have been explaining to you, Ibn Abbas. That his Companions, too, heard my story, was something the Messenger of Allah ﷺ very much enjoyed.

Slavery, which had kept this Salman, never gave him opportunity to join the battles of Badr and Uhud alongside the Messenger of Allah." (Ahmad, V, 441-444; Ibn Hisham; I, 233-242; Ibn Sad, IV, 75-80)

Salman ﷺ was now united with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, for whom he had been searching for all his life. His only desire, henceforth, was to be by the side and at the service of the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ. In fact, seeing Salman's ﷺ eagerness, the Noble Messenger ﷺ one day suggested whether it was possible for him to '…come to an agreement with your master in return for being freed from slavery.' The Jew eventually agreed to free Salman ﷺ, on the condition that he plant three-hundred date trees, including the digging of their ditches, as well as paying him forty *uqiyyah*[437] of gold. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then commanded the Companions to aid Salman ﷺ in meeting these requirements. They all contributed to the best of their capacities and in a short amount of time, the three-hundred date saplings that Salman ﷺ needed were collected.

"Dig the ditches for these saplings, Salman', said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. 'Once you are done, call me so I can plant the saplings with my own hands."

Salman ﷺ recounts what unfolded next:

"With the help of my friends, I began digging ditches for the date saplings. Once we finished digging, I went and informed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and returned with him to the field on which the saplings were to be planted. We were handing the saplings to him and he was planting them. By Allah, in Whose Hand of Might my life resides, there was not a single sapling planted by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ that failed to flourish. I was thus able to meet one part of the agreement. Merely a year had passed when dates began to hang off the branches of the saplings.

Not long after, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned from a battle with spoils, among which was a gold nugget the size of an egg. He sent for me. When I arrived next to him, he said, 'Take this Salman and pay off your debt!'

'How will a small nugget suffice to pay off the debt on my shoulders, Messenger of Allah?' I asked. He then took the nugget and slightly rubbed it on his tongue and told me to 'Take this! Allah the Almighty will cover your debt with it!'

I took the nugget, as I was told, to the Jew. By Allah in Whose Hand of Might Salman's life resides, the nugget weighed exactly forty *uqiyyah*. So blessedly abundant was it that, surely, even Mount Uhud would have weighed less if it were to be placed on the opposite scale!"

437. An *uqiyya* corresponds roughly to 128 grams.

After earning his release from slavery, Salman ؓ took active part in the Battle of Handak, just as he did not remain behind, even once, from being by the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ side in all the battles that were to take place thereafter.[438]

So adored was Salman ؓ by the other Companions and such an intense magnetism did he exert that both the *Ansar* and the *Muhajirun* claimed him as their own. But, no doubt, the greatest compliment of all was made by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself, in saying, "Salman is of us; of the *Ahl'ul-Bayt*." (Ibn Hisham, III, 241)

Throughout his life, the conduct of the celebrated Salman ؓ reflected the beauties of Islamic morality, leaving behind a splendid example for others to pursue.

Just to remember one of those instances:

The Islamic State now sovereign over vast lands, Salman ؓ, the former slave of a Jew, was appointed governor to Madain, where the Sassanids once reigned. A man from Damascus, of the Taym Clan, had arrived in Madain, with a sack of figs. He spotted the unassuming Salman ؓ, who he was unable to recognize, in great part due to the modest woolen cloak he was wearing.

"Come, carry this sack", he called out to Salman ؓ, who, without saying a word, placed the sack above his shoulder and begun to carry it. But unlike the Damascene, the public were quick to notice the governor.

"The man carrying your load is a governor!" they reproached him. Embarrassed, the man then began to apologize, begging to be pardoned for failing to recognize him.

"No harm done", Salman ؓ replied soothingly. "I will carry the sack until I take it to where you want me to take it!" (Ibn Sad, IV, 88)

The Abolition of Child Adoption

Zayd ؓ, who, as a child, was presented to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ by his honorable wife Khadijah ؓ before prophethood, was freed by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Zayd ؓ, however, preferred stay with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ over returning home with his father. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thus adopted him as a child.

Because he loved Zayd ؓ very much, the Noble Messenger ﷺ first had him married to Umm Ayman, a former slave just like Zayd freed by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, and then to Zaynab bint Jahsh ؓ, the daughter of his aunt. Although Zaynab, at first, was hesitant about marrying Zayd, the Prophet's ﷺ wish, reinforced by the below *ayah*, ultimately held sway:

438. See, Ahmad, V, 443-444; Ibn Asir, *Usd'ul-Ghabah,* II, 419; Ibn Abdilber, II, 634-638.

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللهِ أَتْقَيكُمْ

"Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you…" (al-Hujurat, 13)

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَا لًا مُّبِينًا

"It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger to have any option about their decision: if any one disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong Path." (al-Ahzab, 36)

Yet Zaynab's heart could not warm to Zayd and, as a result, they were on the verge of divorce merely a short while into their marriage. Zayd, too, had his complaints regarding her. When he eventually opened up to the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ about his marital problems, he was advised to:

"Hold on to your wife and fear Allah!"

In fact, informed through Divine Revelation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had meanwhile become aware that Zaynab would ultimately end up becoming wed to him; yet hesitant over the possible protests by the hypocrites, that they would raise a storm of malice over the fact that 'Muhammad had wed the ex-wife of his adopted son', he was keeping it secret. The custom of the time gave adopted children a natural born status – they were called by their father's names and given their due of his inheritance.

Not long after, Zayd and Zaynab ﷺ were divorced, followed by another Revelation. The Almighty had decreed that His Messenger ﷺ marry Zaynab. This meant that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would become the first to implement a command that carried the ultimate aim of abolishing the practice of child adoption, in the way that had been practiced in the Age of Ignorance.

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِى أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللهَ وَتُخْفِى فِى نَفْسِكَ مَا اللهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَيهُ فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِّنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِى أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللهِ مَفْعُولا

"And when you said to him to whom Allah had shown favor and to whom you had shown a favor: Keep your wife to yourself and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and you concealed in your soul what Allah would bring to light, and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him. But when Zayd had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the Believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their want of them; and Allah's command shall be performed." (al-Ahzab, 37)

Zaynab ﵂, whose marriage to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was entailed by the Divine Command, would always express her appreciation by saying, "It was my Lord who wed me!" (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 33/3213)

But the event sparked the circulation of malicious rumors among the hypocrites, who began expressing their spite by leveling bitter criticisms at the Seal of the Prophets over what they labeled was his marriage to his son's former wife. But the answer came directly from the Quran:

مَّا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ
رَّسُولَ اللهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Last of the prophets; and Allah is cognizant of all things." (al-Ahzab, 40)

The event thus marked an end to the practice of child adoption, as had been observed throughout the Age of Ignorance.

The allegations made today by contemporary hypocrites, who claim that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was attracted to Zaynab's beauty which was hence the reason for the marriage, are unfounded chatters of ignorance. For Zaynab ﵂ was the Noble Prophet's ﷺ cousin, his aunt's daughter to be precise, which means that he did see her on numerous occasions before that. Had the Blessed Prophet ﷺ nurtured such an intention, he could have easily married Zaynab ﵂ well before Zayd ﵁, a marriage Zaynab would have absolutely had no scruples with.

Simple and shallow minds so accustomed to evaluate marriage solely from the perspective of lust are forever inept in comprehending the reality of the marriages of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Silly and prejudiced judgments inferred by those who have filled their minds and hearts with egoistic inclinations can only be reflections of their sinister, dark worlds. The Noble Messenger's ﷺ spent the first twenty-four years of his marital life, the years of youth where one naturally carries the most vigor, with

the honorable Khadijah ﵂. The marriages he contracted thereafter were completely motivated by certain considerations, be they political or social, but always of Islamic import. An overwhelming majority of these women had been widowed and were older than the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Among them, Aisha ﵂ was the only one who was young and never before married. Even that marriage was to maintain, in the long run, the transference of authentic Islamic knowledge, especially those issues pertaining to females, to the generations of Believers to come. In retrospect, Aisha ﵂ was gifted with an intelligence and prudence that enabled her to completely grasp all the intricate details of legal matters regarding women, and for long years following the Prophet's ﷺ passing away continued to enlighten female Believers with her profound insight, her knowledge effectively becoming a major pillar of an important aspect of Islamic law. One of the seven *fukaha* to have excelled amongst other Companions, it was through her knowledge that Islamic Law became prevalent among female Muslims.

If lust was the motivation behind these marriages, as claimed by the spiteful, then the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would surely have not spent the most vigorous years of his life with a woman fifteen years his senior who moreover had children from a previous marriage. Only people of wisdom and conscience, who have insight into the unique logic of *iman*, may appreciate the subtle wisdom in play within these marriages and the sublime ends they were directed to.

The Command to Cover Up: *Hijab*

Prior to Islam, Arabs had no notion of *hijab*, a circumstance which naturally persisted through to the first years of Islam. But judging from the above mentioned gradualness implemented with regard to the banning of alcohol and gambling, it was obvious that this would not last long. The *ayah* instating *hijab* was finally revealed, which effectively elevated the status of women and increased their repute by virtue of protecting their honor and dignity. Women were turned into statues of chastity and became endowed with a dignified identity.

On the other hand, the ruling of *hijab* concerns not only women, but also men. That is, the relevant command incorporates both males and females in its scope, rendering them both accountable. Thus states Allah, glory unto Him:

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ. وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ

"Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do. And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms…" (an-Nur, 30-31)

Covering protects the feminine character. Through her *hijab*, a woman imparts an aura of elegance and grace. Uncovered, then women are ultimately turned into tools of lust that rouse desires of the ego; and that only disparages their character and dignity, undermining the honor of motherhood.

One thing that must be pointed out here is that there is a natural difference between male and female souls, a difference that comes from creation, from the distinct roles determined by the Almighty that therefore have given rise to a difference of nature. The specific manner of covering therefore varies between men and women. Compared to men, women are gifted with a greater charm and attraction. A female who distances herself from *hijab* and, in a sense, deciphers herself to society, lays ruin to her elegance and graciousness. Her peculiar attribute of motherhood is thereby also dealt a destructive blow of similar proportions. As a measure against all this and by virtue of *hijab*, her charms have therefore been reserved only to her husband. Between males and females a natural, unchangeable tendency that originates from natural predisposition exists, necessary to perpetuate the succession of generations, which, unless one obeys the command of *hijab*, could lead to transgressing the bounds of Divine limits and thus bring about a disastrous moral corruption. In fact, one of the gists of the below command of Allah, glory unto Him:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَى

"And go not nigh to fornication…!" (al-Isra, 32) is 'do not open the doors of fornication through defying the *hijab*; do not unknowingly lay the groundwork for it!' This is an absolute ruling. It is of note that Islam commands not so attractive women to cover up just the same. That is, one cannot say, 'there is no harm in so and so not covering up, for she is not so attractive anyhow'; for *hijab* aims to safeguard female dignity in general.

Islam, which establishes its rulings compliant with natural human disposition, also takes into regard what is required by masculinity and femininity. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ has therefore condemned men who try to act like women and women who try to act like men.[439] To protect themselves from this peril, women should establish friendships with righteous women; for whoever befriends another, soon

439. See, Bukhari, Libas, 61.

becomes like. This is a law of psychology. Once women become innured to sharing the same environment with men, they lose the feminine feelings and those irreplaceable female characteristics.

Imitating the dress sense of the opposite gender has likewise been prohibited. Men who dress like women and women who dress like men, avows the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, will be distant from Divine Compassion.[440] For it is imperative for both genders to preserve their dignities of gender.

Imitating the dress sense of the opposite gender further causes a deficiency of character. The deviancy of choice in clothing, in time, reflects on the person and takes its toll on his/her behavior, and that means the ruin of natural predisposition.

The Muraysi Battle (Shaban-Ramadhan, 5 / January-February, 627)

The Battle is also called Banu Mustaliq, after the tribe who, beguiled by Meccan provocations, had begun preparing a large army to attack Medina. Hearing their plan, the Noble Messenger ﷺ mobilized an army of seven-hundred to meet them. So the two groups met. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ told Omar ﷺ to say to them, 'Say *La ilaha ill- Allah* and protect your lives and properties!' Not only did Banu Mustaliq reject the offer, they also shot the first arrow that got the battle under way.[441]

The Muslims ended up routing Banu Mustaliq, near the Muraysi Water, at the end of a swift onslaught. Ten enemy soldiers were slain on the field, while a single Companion was martyred. A wealth of spoils and captives, including Juwayriya, the daughter of Harith, the chieftain of the tribe, were seized after the Battle.

The captives were being released, one by one, in return for their ransom. Juwayriya had meanwhile fallen to Thabit ibn Qays' lot. She made a formal request to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for her ransom. Her father, too, had come in the meantime. Citing her nobility for being the daughter of a chieftain, he was vehemently insisting her daughter could in no way be enslaved and was pleading for her dignity to be protected. Pointing to some camels he had brought with him, he was saying, "These are my daughter's ransom. Please, let her go!"

Then unexpectedly, the Blessed Prophet asked him where he was hiding 'the two other camels which he had not brought?'

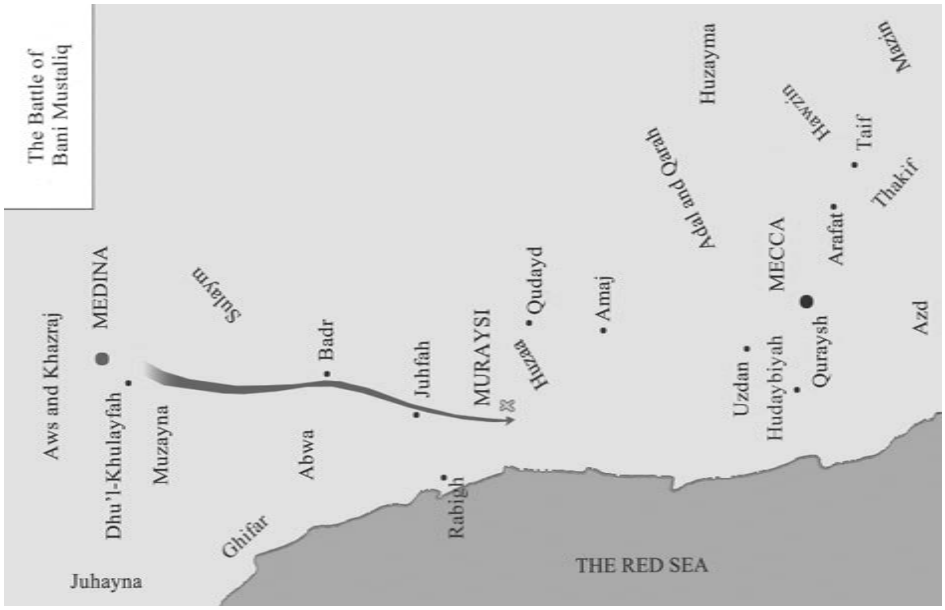
440. See, Abu Dawud, Libâs, 28/4098.
441. See, Waqidi, I, 407.

The stunned Harith, who could have sworn no other soul, except for himself, knew he was hiding two camels in the nearby valley, accepted Islam there and then with the rest of his entourage.[442]

In what followed, the Noble Messenger ﷺ asked Juwayriyah's opinion. She intimated that she would prefer to remain by his side, upon which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ personally reimbursed her ransom and set her free. (Ibn Sad, VIII, 118) The free Juwayriyah accepted Islam, entirely of her own accord. Yet another Divine blessing was to take place soon after: She had the honor of marrying the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ, the realization of a dream she had previously seen. This was the very reason she preferred to stay with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, even though she could have been freed, if she wanted to, through her father paying her ransom.

Upon receiving the news that Juwayriyah was to be wed with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, the Companions thought it would not be right for the now relatives of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to remain captives, so they set them all free. Aisha ﷺ is later known to have commented in regard, "We have never seen a woman with greater virtue than Juwayriyah from among her tribe. A hundred households were freed from Banu Mustaliq thanks to her." (Abu Dawud, Itq, 2/3931)

As is clear, the Prophet's ﷺ marriage to Juwayriyah carried a strictly political impetus, and in accordance with the Almighty's pronouncement:



442. See, Ibn Hisham, III, 340.

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى. إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَى.

"Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed…" (an-Najm, 3-4), it was not from desire, but was rather carried out in line with the Divine Purpose that had he been inspired with. The captives of Banu Mustaliq in fact were set free, free of return, and more importantly, they entered the ranks of Islam in their entirety.

Tayammum

Aisha ﵂ recounts:

"We were together with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the Muraysi Campaign. We had arrived either at the place known as Bayda or Dhat'ul-Jaysh when I realized my bracelet had snapped off and gone missing. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained there for a while in search of it; so with him, the rest also remained. There was no water around where we were, and to make things worse, we had also run out. Some apparently complained to my father Abu Bakr, saying, 'Do you know what Aisha has done? She is holding up the Messenger of Allah and the others, at a place where there is no water, and at a time when we have run out!' Just as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had fallen asleep on my lap Abu Bakr came along.

'You have detained the Messenger of Allah and the others here! Not only is there no water around, they are also out of their final stock!' he said, rebuking me. Unable to take out his anger, he even hurt me a little. I tried not to move for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had his head on my knees, sleeping.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ woke up in the morning there was still no water. It was not long after when Allah the Almighty revealed the *tayammum ayah*:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ
مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِّنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللّٰهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ حَرَجٍ
وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهَّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

'…and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy, or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith, Allah does not desire to put on

you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favor on you, so that you may be grateful.' (al-Maida, 6)

Usayd ibn Khudayr ﷺ thereupon remarked, 'this is only one of your blessings for this *ummah*, the Abu Bakr family, among numerous others.'

When I had the camel get up on its feet, we found the necklace lying underneath it." (Bukhari, Tayammum, 1; Ashab'un-Nabi, 5, 30)

Usayd ﷺ also praised Aisha ﷺ, saying, "May Allah award you with good, for whenever you undergo an unpleasant experience, Allah turns it into something good, for both you and the Muslims." (Bukhari, Tayammum, 1)

The *Ifk* Incident or the Slander

It was again during the return from the Muraysi Battle, when Aisha ﷺ,[443] the Prophet's ﷺ wife of purity and innocence, had slightly moved away from the army to see to a need. By the time she returned, however, the army had long departed. Because the *hijab* command had been revealed by then, Aisha ﷺ, the mother of Believers, had begun to travel in a *hawdaj* placed on the saddle of a camel. Thus, when the army did make a move, the Believers had naturally assumed Aisha ﷺ was still inside the *hawdaj*.

Instead of pursuing the army at the risk of getting lost, Aisha ﷺ preferred to wait where she was. While waiting, she dosed off. Then, she was noticed by Safwan ibn Muattal ﷺ, who had the duty of gathering those who remained behind from the army. To make his presence felt to Aisha ﷺ who was still asleep, he recited:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return…" (al-Baqara, 156) Aisha ﷺ woke to the sound. Without even an uttering a single word, Safwan ﷺ had the camel crouch and Aisha ﷺ mounted the camel. They caught up with the rest of the Believers at noon. That was it. But the hypocrites, as if they now had a perfect opportunity to give vent to their malice, had another thing on their minds. They fabricated an ugly slander.

"Neither Aisha has let herself go from the man, nor the man from Aisha", they said. Abdullah ibn Ubayy even went further in his mockery, saying to the Believers, "There is the wife of your Prophet…she has spent the night with another man!"

443. Prior to each battle, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to draw lots between his wives take one of them along. This time it was Aisha ﷺ.

The gossip soon had the entire army in its grip. Abu Bakr ﷺ began trembling with inexpressible pain the moment he heard it. "By Allah", he lamented, "not even during the days of Ignorance did we ever be on the end of such slander!"

Safwan ﷺ, a praiseworthy Companion about whom the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had said, "I know of naught but good regarding him", had resigned to a deep sorrow.

As for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, no doubt it was his heart where the most scorching flame of grief had spread. For a while, he took to remaining indoors and to a certain extent remained distant from people. He also had a small investigation carried out on the matter. There was not even a tiny proof that could suggest Aisha ﷺ was guilty. But the mouths of the hypocrites would just not shut.

Aisha ﷺ was the last to hear of the rumor. Overcome with unbearable grief as one would expect, she nonetheless gathered her composure to the best she could, and after gaining permission from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, went to her father's house to see what it was all about. Once given the details of what she was accused with, she virtually melted, withering like an autumn leaf.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ wanted to have a word with Aisha ﷺ. So he went to Abu Bakr's ﷺ house.

"I have been hearing some things. If you are innocent, Allah will clear your name!"

Perceiving a slight air of doubt in the words of the Blessed Prophet, the delicate and sensitive Aisha ﷺ, looked appealingly to her parents; but they preferred to remain quiet. She then, behind teary eyes, said the following heartfelt words to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ:

"By Allah, I am almost certain that you, too, have just about believed the things you have heard. Now, if I was to tell you of my innocence –and indeed Allah knows I am- you might not believe me. Yet, if I was to tell you the opposite, you might. But Allah knows I am innocent…I will therefore wait for His aid against all that has been said…"

With the rumors still rampant, the following conversation took place between Abu Ayyub al-Ansari ﷺ and his wife Umm Ayyub ﷺ.

"Have you heard what people have been saying about Aisha?" Umm Ayyub asked her husband.

"Yes, I have, and they are nothing but fabricated lies", replied Abu Ayyub. "Would you ever do something like that?"

"No way, I could never commit an evil of the kind", replied Umm Ayyub, whereupon her husband said, "Then know that Aisha is much more righteous than you to do something like that!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 347; Waqidi, II, 434)

Only Revelation could now settle the matter; and it was not very long before the Almighty put an end to the rumors. It became obvious that the words were nothing but the slander of hypocrites. As well as absolving Aisha ﵂ of all guilt, the Divine Pronouncements revealed in relation were at the same time flinging these unfounded lies back in the faces of these hypocrites, informing them of an impending punishment, as well as warning the ignorants who went on about the unfounded claim:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاؤُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ.

"Surely they who concocted the lie are a party from among you. Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you. Every man of them shall have what he has earned of sin; and (as for) him who took upon himself the main part thereof, he shall have a grievous chastisement.

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ. لَوْلَا جَاؤُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَاءِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ عِنْدَ اللهِ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ. وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ. إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللهِ عَظِيمٌ.

Why did not the believing men and the believing women, when you heard it, think well of their own people, and say: This is an evident falsehood? Why did they not bring four witnesses of it? But as they have not brought witnesses they are liars before Allah. And were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy in this world and the hereafter, a grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into. When you received it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you deemed it an easy matter while with Allah it was grievous.

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَا
أَنْ نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ.

And why did you not, when you heard it, say: It does not beseem us that we should talk of it; glory be to Thee! this is a great slander?

يَعِظُكُمُ اللهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ.
وَيُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.

Allah admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again if you are believers. And Allah makes clear to you the communications; and Allah is Knowing, Wise.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ. وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللهَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ.

Surely (as for) those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter; and Allah knows, while you do not know. And were it not for Allah's grace on you and His mercy, and that Allah is Compassionate, Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَّتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا
مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ يُزَكِّى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

O you who believe! do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan, and whoever follows the footsteps of the Shaitan, then surely he bids the doing of indecency and evil; and were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing." (an-Nur, 11-21)

Aisha ﵂ was the first person whom the Blessed Prophet ﷺ informed of the superb news of the Revelation.

"Glad tidings, Aisha", he said cheerfully, "Allah has acquitted you!"

After sending her praises and thanks to the Almighty, Aisha ﵂ responded by saying, "I would never have thought a Revelation would take into regard a helpless servant like me. All I had anticipated was an inspiration in the Prophet's heart that would have proven my innocence!"

To her father Abu Bakr ﵁, who kissed his daughter on the forehead and advised her to return to her husband, she remarked, rather hurt, "I will not thank anyone but Allah; for He made known my innocence!"

The Noble Messenger ﷺ thereupon smiled. A distress that lasted an entire month had now ended, thanks to the grace and compassion of Allah, glory unto Him. (Bukhari, Shahadat, 15, 30; Jihad, 64; Maghazi, 11, 34; Muslim, Tawba, 56; Ahmad, VI, 60, 195)

The woman who had become a victim of the atrocious slander was the wife of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, the mother of Believers, the daughter of the Prophet's ﷺ best friend, who was moreover among the most chaste women of the *ummah*. Just this ordeal suffices to indicate the forbearing power prophets have in the face of tribulations. It, at the same time, provides a comforting consolance to all the victims of slander to come until the Final Hour.

Now, despite the indisputable fact that the Holy Quran absolves the honorable Aisha ﵂ from all guilt, in no uncertain manner, by describing the accusation as 'an evident falsehood' and 'a great slander', what else is there to be said to the ignorant who continue to level accusations at her for later taking part in the Jamal Incident?

Those found guilty of fabricating the slander were punished for accusing an honorable woman of adultery. The slanderers were each flogged eighty times with a cane.[444]

According to Ibn Abbas ﵄, there have only been four people in history to have been exonerated by Allah, glory unto Him: Yusuf ﵇ through the word of a witness from among the friends of the woman who had accused him,[445] Musa ﵇ from the rumors of the Jews,[446] the dignified Maryam by making her newborn talk[447] and Aisha ﵂ by those glorious *ayah* of the Holy Quran bound to be recited until the Final Hour. Never has there been seen an acquittal of similar eloquence revealed by the Almighty that points to the sublime rank of His Messenger. (Zamakhshari, IV, 121)

The delay of Revelation at a time of such dire need was to emphasize the fact that the Prophet ﷺ, as well as being the Messenger of Allah, was after all a human

444. Ahmad, VI, 35.
445. See, Yusuf, 26-29.
446. See, al-Ahzab, 69.
447. See, Maryam, 29-33.

being who therefore exercised no command over the coming of Revelation. It thereby served to test the sincerity of the Believers.

Abu Bakr ﷺ used to lend frequent aid to a poor man called Mistah. Seeing Mistah, too, was among the slanderers during the incident, he vowed never again to help him or his family. Once he stopped his aid, Mistah and his family became really deprived, upon which the Almighty revealed:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُوْلِى الْقُرْبَى
وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا
تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

"And let not those of you who possess grace and abundance swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah's way, and they should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (an-Nur, 22)

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللهَ عُرْضَةً لِّأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا
وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ.

"And make not Allah's (name) an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons; for Allah is One Who heareth and knoweth all things." (al-Baqara, 224)

The above *ayat* yield concrete evidences attesting to the mercy Allah, glory unto Him, has for his servants. Alternately, they provide a target to enhance the qualities of the virtuous.

"Of course, I would want Allah to forgive me", commented Abu Bakr ﷺ immediately upon hearing the Revelation. Then paying the compensation (*kaffarah*) of his oath, he continued giving the charity like before. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 34; Muslim, Tawba, 56; Tabari, Tafsir, II, 546)

Hence, Abu Bakr ﷺ did not withhold his charity even from a person who had slandered her daughter, which goes to show how great a man of virtue the illustrious Companion was.

They are the Enemy…Beware!

That was not the end of the trouble the hypocrites caused on the way back from the Muraysi Battle. An argument had broken out between two men, an *Ansar* and a *Muhajir*, in which Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, saw an opportunity to let out his frustration. Alluding to the *Muhajirun*, he spitefully said, "See what they are now doing? They begun dominating us in our own town and now they do not even recognize us! But they shall see when we return to Medina…the more honorable will drive out the piteous!"

Zayd ibn Arqam ﷺ, the righteous Believer who heard these words by Ibn Ubayy, exclaimed, "You are the most piteous amongst your tribe! Allah the Almighty has made Muhammad ﷺ honorable!"

Upon finding out that their words of arrogance reached the Prophet's ear, the hypocrites swiftly changed their tune, vowing never to have said anything of the kind; so much so that they made Zayd ibn Arqam ﷺ look like a liar, causing the brave Companion much distress. Omar ﷺ, however, had another thing in mind: he asked the Blessed Prophet's permission to kill the hypocrites, beginning with Abdullah ibn Ubayy. But showing a piercing foresight and prudence, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said, "Omar…People who do not have insight as to what is going on will then say, 'Muhammad is killing his folk!'. No, I will not do anything of the kind! Tell the Believers to get ready to resume the journey!"

The Believers resumed their march to Medina. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ continued the march until evening, and then without break, until morning. Once the sun began to make its heat felt in the morning, he commanded a stopover. Tired and fatigued from the long walk, the Believers did not waste much time in falling to sleep. This Prophet's ﷺ decision to act in this manner was only to prevent the Muslims from being preoccupied with the words of Abdullah ibn Ubayy.[448] The delicate strategy followed by the Noble Prophet ﷺ in this regard shows his intimate knowledge of human nature.

Soon there came successive Revelations laying bare the sinister condition of the hypocrites:

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللهِ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ. اِتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً

448. See, Ibn Hisham, III, 335-336.

فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ. ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ.

"When the hypocrites come to you, they say: We bear witness that you are most surely Allah's Messenger; and Allah knows that you are most surely His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars. They make their oaths a shelter, and thus turn away from Allah's way; surely evil is that which they do. That is because they believe, then disbelieve, so a seal is set upon their hearts so that they do not understand.

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ
خُشُبٌ مُسَنَّدَةٌ يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ
فَاحْذَرْهُمْ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ.

And when you see them, their persons will please you, and If they speak, you will listen to their speech; (they are) as if they were big pieces of wood clad with garments; they think every cry to be against them. They are the enemy, therefore beware of them; may Allah destroy them, whence are they turned back?

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللهِ لَوَّوْا رُؤُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ
يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ. سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ
لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ.

And when it is said to them: Come, the Messenger of Allah will ask forgiveness for you, they turn back their heads and you may see them turning away while they are big with pride. It is alike to them whether you beg forgiveness for them or do not beg forgiveness for them; Allah will never forgive them; surely Allah does not guide the transgressing people.

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُّوا
وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ. يَقُولُونَ

لَئِنْ رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.

They it is who say: Do not spend upon those who are with the Messenger of Allah until they break up. And Allah's are the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand. They say: If we return to Medina, the mighty will surely drive out the meaner therefrom; and to Allah belongs the might and to His Messenger and to the Believers, but the hypocrites do not know." (al-Munafiqun, 1-8)

After the above Revelation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ called Zayd ibn Arqam and, after reciting to him the *ayah*, said, "Allah has affirmed you, Zayd!" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 63/1-2; Muslim, Sifat'ul-Munafiqin, 1)

He then gently held Zayd's ear and added, "Here is the young man who, with his ear, has fulfilled his duty in the way of Allah." (Ibn Hisham, III, 336)

Ironically, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the notorious ringleader of the hypocrites, had a son by the name of Abdullah, a sincere Muslim inseparably attached to the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Much grieved by the mischiefs of his father for some time, the recent developments had really made his blood boil. He felt the need to see the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"If you wish, Messenger of Allah", he said, "I will kill my father!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as expected, did not allow Abdullah to go ahead with what he had in mind, moreover advising him to, "…instead, behave leniently towards him and get along with him nicely so long as he remains among us."

Nonetheless, Abdullah ran to his father, strolling among the Muslim ranks, and seizing his camel by the halter, shouted, "I will not let you move an inch until you say 'honor and might belong to Allah and His Messenger!"

The chief hypocrite was left stunned. He could not swallow what his own son was doing to him in the presence of a crowd of onlookers.

"Will you not let me inside Medina in front of all these people?"

"Not until I teach you today once and for all who the most honorable and the most pitiable are in front of all these people!" responded Abdullah, in a courageous and resolute tone. "And if you do not admit to it", he added, "I will sever your head!"

The hypocrite had nowhere to run; petrified to think that his son meant every word he said. He had no other choice than to recant all his previous words, even if it be unwillingly.

"I admit", he murmured reluctantly, "that honor and might belong to Allah and His Messenger!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then prayed, "May Allah reward you with good on behalf of His Messenger and the Believers", before telling him to clear his father's way. (Ibn Hisham, III, 334-337; Ibn Sad, II, 65; Haythami, IX, 317-318; Zamakhshari, VI, 117)

The Companions loved the Blessed Prophet ﷺ so much that they could not bear seeing him get hurt in the least. Any disrespect towards the Noble Messenger ﷺ would infuriate them to the point where they would feel like like killing the person responsible, without the blink of an eye, even if the culprit was their father.

An Insufferable Ordeal and A Severe Trial:
The Battle of Handak (Shawwal-Dhilqadah, 5/ March, 627)

Driven solely by the aim of wiping the Islamic State of Medina off the face of history, the Battle of Handak was perhaps the most horrific war the idolaters ever waged on Muslims.

Some notables of the expelled Banu Nadir had taken refuge in the forts of Khaybar, ablaze with feelings of vengeance. They offered to join forces with Quraysh. Not only that, they even assured the idolaters that the idolatry they practiced was far more superior to Islam, upon which Allah, glory unto Him, declared:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجِبْتِ
وَالطَّاغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْدَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَبِيلًا.
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللهُ وَمَنْ يَلْعَنِ اللهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ نَصِيرًا.

"Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book has been given? They believe in idols and false deities and say of those who disbelieve: These are better guided in the path than those who believe. Those are they whom Allah has cursed, and whomever Allah curses you shall not find any helper for him." (an-Nisa, 51-52)[449]

Already anticipating the smallest opportunity to come by, the idolaters were quick to act upon the offer made by the Jews. Many idolater tribes in Arabia had already been encouraged by the Muslim setback at Uhud, much to the delight of

449. See, Wahidi, p. 160.

Quraysh, who made the most of this widespread enthusiasm and garnered an army of more than ten-thousand.[450]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, aware that the allied army were preparing themselves to march on Medina, discussed the urgent matter with the Companions, guaranteeing them victory, so long as they refrained from rebelling against the commands of Allah, glory unto Him, and were prepared to endure the hardships that may come in His way. The Prophet ﷺ moreover commanded them to obey Allah and His Messenger under all circumstances.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ was then inspired by the Almighty to dig trenches around Medina. He thereupon asked the Companions whether it would be better to face the enemy outside of Medina or dig trenches around the town and defend her from within.

"In Persia, Messenger of Allah", said Salman ؓ, "we used to dig trenches around our town when expecting an enemy raid!"

The words of Salman ؓ, an affirmation of the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ advice, were overall accepted by the Muslims.[451] They furthermore remembered the Prophet's ﷺ desire to remain in the town during Uhud and wage a defensive war. So they wholeheartedly agreed on digging trenches around Medina.

Only from one side was Madina accessible and prone to be attacked. The rest of the sides were covered with houses connected to one another, much like a castle. Gaps were few and far between and were anyhow densely covered with date trees, rendering any effort of trespassing impossible. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ therefore decided that the trenches should be dug only on that open side. Assigning a group of ten Companions to each of the allocated sections along the line between the Shaykhayn Castles to Mazad, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ told them the exact scope he wanted the trenches to be dug.[452]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ labored personally during the digging, even tying a stone around his abdomen to curb his hunger, owing to the shortage of food that arose at the time.[453]Still, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ was expressing only gratitude to his Lord.

Bara ibn Azib ؓ narrates:

450. See, Waqidi, II, 444; Ibn Saad, II, 66.
451. Ibn Hisham, III, 231; Waqidi, II, 445.
452. Tabari, *Târîh,* II, 568; Diyarbakri, I, 482.
453. Bukhari, Maghazi, 29.

"I saw the Messenger of Allah carry soil with us on the day of *Ahzab*,[454] uttering at the same time a poem of Abdullah ibn Rawaha:

'Allah, had it not been for Your guidance, we could neither have given charity nor have offered salat. Allah, engulf us in serenity when we encounter the enemy; let not our feet slip. They are the ones assailing us…when they wish to push us into tribulation we will press forth and not flee!'

And when saying *abayna* (press forth, not flee), he was raising his voice." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 29)

The Companions were in such strife that they could not even feed themselves. Anas ﷺ provides a vivid description of their ordeal:

"A handful of barley would be brought, which, after being cooked with some outdated butter, would be put in front of the Companions to eat. Despite of the enormity of their hunger, it was impossible for each person not to taste the hardness and foul taste of the butter. The food would carry a heavy and unpleasant odor." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 29)

All Muslims, young and old, were taking part in digging the trenches. Zayd ibn Thabit ﷺ, a fifteen year old kid at the time, had at one stage fallen asleep on the duty. The Companions around him meanwhile had left him lying asleep on the fringe of the trenches. As a joke, Umarah ibn Hazm ﷺ took his weapons and hid them. Waking up to see that his weapons had gone missing, Zayd panicked. Hearing this, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ called Zayd next to him and said:

"You fell asleep, sleeper, and your weapons vanished!" After that the Prophet ﷺ asked, "Does anybody know the whereabouts of this kid's weapons?"

"I know, Messenger of Allah", said Umarah ﷺ, "they are with me!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then asked Umarah to return the weapons to Zayd and prohibited from frightening Muslims, even as a joke, and hiding any of their belongings. (Waqidi, II, 448)

The Glad Tidings Given at Handak

The Companions complained to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ about a large rock they came upon while digging, which they could not break clear. So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ grabbed a pointy sledgehammer and, saying the name of Allah, glory unto Him, struck the rock three times, crushing it like fine sand.[455] With each strike, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ relieved the Believers with glad tidings. Given to him after the

454. Being a joint effort by numerous tribes who combined forces to assail the Believers, the Battle of Handak has also been called *Ahzab*, meaning clans or coalition.

455. Bukhari, Maghazi, 29.

first strike, he said, were the keys of Damascus (Byzantine), the keys of Persia after the second strike, and the keys of Yemen after the third. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ told the Companions he could see the palaces of these places from where he was. Informing the Believers that all of these places were to be honored with the guidance of Islam and the word of Allah in the near future, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ injected in them the hope of all the victories to come.[456] He assured them that very soon the Truth would triumph over the false, and victories previously inconceivable were now looming realities.

When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ began describing the white palace of the Khosrau in the Sassanid stronghold of Madain, Salman ؓ, who knew it from experience, concurred, stating, "By Allah, who has sent you with the true religion and book, that palace is exactly how you have described it! I bear witness once more that you are the Messenger of Allah!"

"Salman", then responded the Noble Messenger, "Allah will grant you these victories after me. Damascus will surely fall! Heraclius will flee to the furthermost distant corner of his realm! You will reign over the entire region of Damascus! Nobody will be able to stand in your way! Yemen will surely fall! The Khosrau will be killed after that!"

Salman ؓ much later testified to having seen "…each of those take place." (Waqidi, II, 450)

As each of these regions fell one by one, Abu Hurayra ؓ would likewise say, "These are only the beginning for you! By Allah, in whose Hand of Might the life of Abu Hurayrah resides, the Almighty has given Muhammad ﷺ the keys of the entire places you have taken and will take until the Final Hour!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 235)

The glad tidings the Blessed Prophet ﷺ heralded the Believers with provided an enormous spiritual comfort to help them endure the hardships still to come. That victory would ultimately belong to the Believers and dismay to their enemies only served to enhance the patience and endurance of the *iman* filled hearts of Muslims. Indeed, a colossal amount of patience and endurance would be needed; a fierce battle against fatigue and hunger on the one hand, and blistering cold on the other, Handak would indeed prove to be an almost insufferable ordeal. But above all, a prayer the Blessed Prophet ﷺ uttered in the trenches was an emotional reminder that all pains and sufferings undergone in the world, no matter how intense, would eventually mean nothing compared to the eternal bliss awaiting:

"O my Lord! Life is but that of the Hereafter! So help the *Ansar* and the *Muhajir*!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 29)

456. See, Ahmad, IV, 303; Ibn Saad, IV, 83, 84.

Jabir's Abundant Meal

Recounting below is Jabir ﷺ:

"While digging trenches in the days preceding the Battle of Handak, we were thwarted by a rather hard rock. A few Companions went to the Messenger of Allah and told him they had come upon a hard rock they were unable to break.

'I will go down in to the trenches myself' the Messenger of Allah told them. He then got up. He had a stone tied to his belly from hunger. It had been three days since we had eaten anything. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ grabbed hold of the pickaxe and struck a blow at the rock, which then shattered, turning into something like a sand dune.

'Allow me to go home, Messenger of Allah', I asked afterwards. Given permission, I went home and told my wife of seeing '…the Messenger of Allah in an exhausted condition. Do we have something to eat?'

'Some barley and a kid', she said.

So I slaughtered the kid and seeved the barley. We placed the meat in a pot. Just as the bread was nearly baked and the pot was beginning to boil on the rocks on which it was placed, I rushed to the Messenger of Allah and said:

'I have some food, Messenger of Allah. Please, honor us with a couple of other persons…'

'How much food is there?' he asked. I told him what we had. He then said, 'Good and plenty…Tell your wife not to take the pot away from the fire and keep the bread in the furnace until I arrive!'

Then turning to his Companions he called out, raising his voice, 'People of the trenches; come…Jabir has prepared a feast for us!' Everyone present made a move.

Anxious, I ran home to my wife and said, 'Look what has happened now…The Messenger of Allah is coming with the entire *Ansar*, *Muhajirun* and others alike!'

'Did the Messenger of Allah ask how much food there was?' she asked.

'Yes' responded I.

'Then not to worry', she said calmly, 'for he knows more than you!'

They arrived a short while after. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told them to enter without cramming each other. The Companions entered in tens. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then began splitting a loaf of bread, putting some meat on it and giving it to each of the awaiting Companions; and each time he would close the lid of both the pot and the furnace once he was done. Until each and every Companion, around a thousand all up, ate to their hearts content, the Prophet ﷺ repeated the same pro-

cedure. There was even some food left over in the end. Then turning to my wife, he said, 'Eat this and offer some to your neighbors, too; for hunger has really devastated everyone!' (Bukhari, Maghazi, 29; Muslim, Ashribah, 141; Waqidi, II, 452)

The evident miracle of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ saw a thousand people, including the surrounding neighbors, eat from what was seemingly enough for only a few people.

Because the Noble Messenger ﷺ used to spend all he had in the way of Allah, glory unto Him, he would never have much at hand. When he did feel a genuine need, he would keep it secret from his Companions, not wanting to be a burden on anyone. But as the Companions were attentive to the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ condition, they would do all they could to help him whenever they sensed him in need. At times, the Prophet's voice would give away the enormous degree of his hunger, which is when the Companions would immediately take him to their homes and offer him what food they had.[457] Given they saw the Blessed Prophet ﷺ with a pale complexion, they would leave no stone unturned to find something for him to eat, even doing some chores, like watering camels for instance, just to earn a few dates to take to him.

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ one day came across an *Ansari* Companion, who asked, "May my parents die for your sake, Messenger of Allah…please tell me the reason why your face is so pale, for it worries me!'

After staring at the Companion for a few moments, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then simply said, "Hunger!"

The Companion wasted no time in running home, where he rummaged for something to eat, but to no avail. As swiftly, he then went to the Banu Qurayza quarters, and made an agreement with a man, according to which he was to be paid one date for each bucket of water he pulled out from a well. Once he saved up a handful of dates, he took them to the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

"Please, Messenger of Allah; have these", he said.

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ asked him where had gotten the dates from. He explained the story. Thereupon the Blessed Prophet ﷺ commented, "I believe you love Allah and His Messenger!"

"Yes," replied the Companion, "by Allah who has sent you upon Truth, you are dearer to me than my self, my children, my wife and my wealth!"

"If that is the case", replied the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "keep patient against poverty, prepare a shield for yourself against troubles! By Allah, who has sent me upon

457. See, Bukhari, Atimah, 6; Muslim, Ashribah, 142.

Truth, these two (poverty and troubles) reach a person who loves me quicker than water flowing down a mountain!" (Haythami, X, 313; Dhahabi, Siyar, III, 54; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, III, 298)

Hardships Endured at Handak

It was winter. The idolaters had now besieged Medina from all sides. But they were stunned and frustrated from the trenches they had unexpectedly encountered. They could not pass through.

Once the idolaters encamped on the fringes of the town, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ made a swift move to the trenches, accompanied by three-thousand Companions. Abdullah ibn Umm Maqtum ؓ was left deputy in Medina. Taking Mount Sal behind him, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ set up his camp on the outskirts of the mountain, ordering the women and children be left behind in the inner part of the town to be placed in forts.[458] Children who had not yet turned fifteen were sent back to the forts next to their families, while the likes of Ibn Omar, Zayd ibn Thabit and Bara ibn Azib, fifteen at the time, were allowed to remain.[459]

The Jews of Banu Kurayza, meanwhile, officially revolted in the town, breaching for the second time their pact with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. This was their second betrayal, leaving the Muslims in a terrible crossfire. The Jews sent a message to Abu Sufyan, insisting him to "…hold on, for we will strike the Muslims from behind and annihilate them!"[460]

This Prophet of Allah ﷺ was deeply insulted by the Jewish betrayal. Still, he had unshakable trust in the Almighty, murmuring, even at such dire times:

"*Hasbunallah wa ni'mal-wakil*: Allah is sufficient for us and the Most Excellent Protector!" (Waqidi, II, 457; Ibn Sad, II, 67)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then asked for a volunteer to go to Banu Qurayza and see whether there was any truth to what he had heard.

"I will go", said Zubayr ibn Awwam ؓ and went.

Once the situation got really precarious, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, again, sent Zubayr ibn Awwam, again and again, to see if the Jews had gotten their acts together. He later expressed his satisfaction of the precious services of Zubayr ؓ with the compliment, "Every prophet has a messenger…and my messenger is Zubayr!" (Ahmad, III, 314)

458. Ibn Hisham, III, 235.
459. Waqidi, II, 453.
460. Abdurrazzaq, V, 368.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then sent an envoy to the Banu Qurayza, advising them to "Go and see whether what we have heard is true. If true, then inform me in an indirect way. Do not say it directly and thereby cast fear into people's hearts and send them into despair! But if they are true to our pact you can then openly announce it!"

The envoy ended up finding Banu Qurayza in a far more tumultuous state of mutiny than they had heard. (Ibn Hisham, III, 237)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ deployed two-hundred Companions under the command of Salamah ibn Aslam ؓ and a further three-hundred under Zayd ؓ in Medina, as a preventative measure against a possible attack on the town by the Jews. They were to stand guard inside the town and patrol the streets calling out *Allah'u Akbar*.[461]

The Believers used to breathe a sigh of relief when finding out, at the dawn of each night, that another day had broken without a Banu Qurayza raid.

"Our fear on behalf of our women and children in Medina over a raid by Banu Qurayza", later professed Abu Bakr ؓ, "was greater than our fear of Quraysh and the Ghatafan. Time and again I used to climb to the top of Mount Sal and gaze at the houses in Medina; and seeing them in peace and quiet, I used to thank and praise Allah." (Waqidi, II, 460)

Umm Salamah ؓ utters similar words:

"I was present with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at many heated and fearsome battles like Muraysi, Khaybar, the Conquest of Mecca and Hunayn. None of those were more troublesome and alarming for the Messenger of Allah than Handak. We were never at ease about Banu Qurayza raiding our women and children." (Waqidi, II, 467)

Meanwhile, the idolaters on the other side of the trenches were making frequent attempts to cross over, which saw the clashes ensue until late at night, with the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ tent even becoming the target of a fair share of arrows.

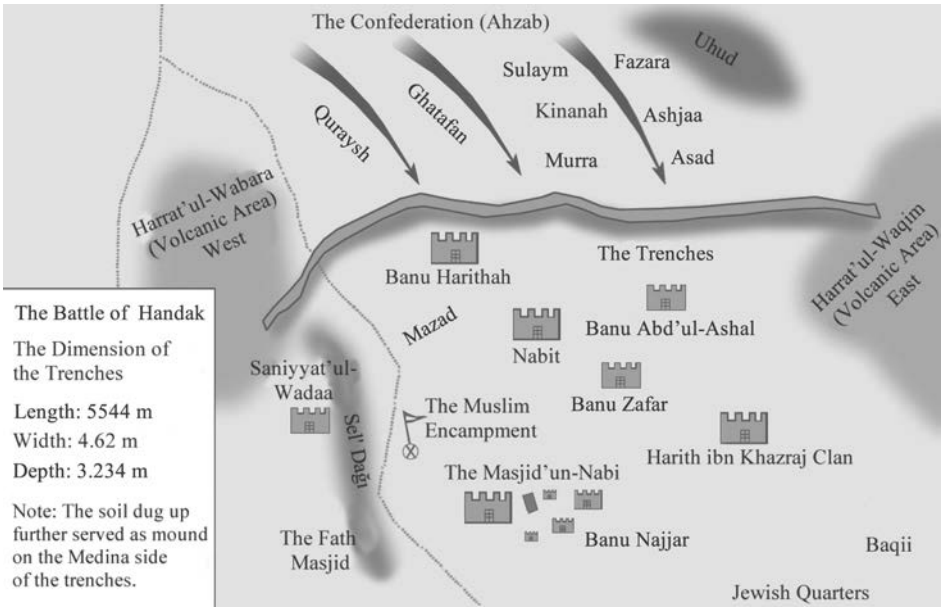
The idolaters, one day, waged an all-out attack on where the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had encamped; and because of these ensuing assaults, the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions could not find a moments opportunity to offer their *zuhr* and *asr* salats. Around nightfall, when the idolaters at long last retreated, the Noble Messenger ﷺ asked Bilal ؓ to call out the *adhan*. With a *qamat* recited for every salat, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then lead the Companions in each of those salats they could not offer on time.[462] Deeply upset by this, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent the following ill-wishes to

461. Ibn Saad, II, 67.

462. The incident is an evidence for *qada* salat, that is being able to perform later the salats left unpe - formed on time.

the idolaters who held him back from offering salat, a deed he had called the 'light of my eye':

"Just as they kept us preoccupied and held us back from offering salat until sunset, may Allah fill their houses, bellies and graves with fire!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 29; Ibn Sad, II, 68-69; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, IV, 112)



Feats of Courage at Handak

The entire Believers present, young and old, were doing all they could during the Battle, keeping guard by the narrowest parts of the trenches.[463]

Recounting below is the honorable Umm Salamah ﵂:

"I was with the Messenger of Allah at Handak. I never left his side there or in any of the other places where he was. He was personally standing by the trenches. There, we were caught amid a blistering cold. I was staring at him; he had begun offering salat. We then walked off. After gazing towards the trenches for a while, he then said, 'It looks like those are the idolaters' cavalrymen making their way around the trenches. Who will stop them?' He then called out, 'Abbad ibn Bishr!'

'Yes, Messenger of Allah', Abbad ﵁ replied.

'Is there anybody with you?' asked the Messenger of Allah.

463. Waqidi, II, 463-464.

'Yes…a few of your Companions and I happen to be waiting around your tent.'

'Go and walk along the trenches with your friends! The cavalrymen who are visible from a distance seem to be of the enemy. They are coming for you; they wish to catch you off guard, make a sudden raid and kill as many of you as they can!'

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then prayed, "O my Lord! Take their evil away from us! Help us against them and enable us to defeat them! There is no one but You who can make us victorious!"

Abbad ibn Bishr ﷺ took off with his friends to survey along the trenches, the narrowest part of which, at that instant, Abu Sufyan happened to be making a dangerous effort to cross with a cavalry unit. The small group of Companions got there right in the nick of time to shoot enough arrows and throw enough stones to force the idolaters to retreat. (Waqidi, II, 464)

Safiyya ﷺ, the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ aunt, was at Hassan ibn Thabit's large house, known as Fari, with the other women and children throughout. At one stage, a group of ten Jews came and showering the house with arrows, wanted to make a forced entry. One among them, especially, was clandestinely roaming around the house in hope of finding a passage through. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was meanwhile in a heated clash with the idolaters at the trenches.

Unaided and thus with no other option left than to take the matter in her own hands, Safiyya ﷺ tightly tied a cloth around her head and with a pole in her hand, made her way down the stairs of the house. Quietly opening the entrance door, she furtively made her way behind the wandering Jew and swiftly yet effectively struck the pole across his head, killing him at the instant. Moments later, seeing their friend sprawled on the ground dead in the dark, the other Jews became alarmed. "We were told that the women here are protected by guards, weren't we?" they said as they unceremoniously went their own ways. (Haythami, VI, 133-134; Waqidi, II, 462)

Aisha ﷺ recounts her observations of the enthusiasm of the Companions for *jihad*:

"I was observing the fighters during the Battle of Handak. I heard a voice coming from behind. I turned around and saw Saad ibn Muadh and his nephew Harithah ibn Aws. I sat down on the spot. He was wearing an armor around his chest and his arms were sticking out from the sides. He was reciting a poem that encouraged *jihad* and spoke of how beautiful death was once it arrived. His mother was yelling out to him, 'Run, my dear…catch up with the Messenger of Allah, for you are running late!'

'I would have liked to have seen Saad's armor cover his entire body to his fingertips', I said to Saad's mother. I was worried he might be struck with arrows in his exposed arms.

'Allah will realize His will, was all she replied. Saad was wounded that day." (Ahmad, VI, 141; Ibn Hisham, III, 244)

Realizing his wound was fatal, Saad ﷺ prayed:

"O my Lord! If You have willed for us another battle with the idolaters of Quraysh then let me survive to see that day! For there is no other tribe I want to fight more than Quraysh, who have tormented and mistreated Your Messenger, denied him and expelled him out of his hometown! But if this is the end of our battles with them then let my wound serve as a cause for my martyrdom! Accept me in Your presence! And do not take my life until I see and rejoice the punishment of Banu Qurayza!" (Waqidi, II, 525; Ibn Sad, III, 423)

The minute Saad ﷺ completed his prayer, his bleeding stopped.[464]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had a tent erected for Saad ﷺ inside the *Masjid*, in order to able to frequently visit him and attend to him more closely.[465]

Only a handful of idolaters were able to cross the wide trenches. One of them was Amr ibn Abd, a warrior renowned throughout entire Arabia. His arrogant challenge was met with by Ali ﷺ who made light work of him. The others suffered a similar doom.

The Battle was ensuing; it seemed like it would never end. The Believers were caught in such a delicate and difficult situation that they were now desperately anticipating Divine aid. Their states are depicted in the Quran as follows:

إِذْ جَاؤُوكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتْ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللهِ الظُّنُونَا. هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا.

"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes turned dull, and the hearts rose up to the throats, and you began to think diverse thoughts of Allah. There the believers were tried and they were shaken with severe shaking."

464. Tirmidhi, Siyar, 29/1582; Ahmad, III, 350.
465. Bukhari, Maghazi, 30.

وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا. وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِنْ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا. وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُئِلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ لَآتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوا بِهَا إِلَّا يَسِيرًا. وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ لَا يُوَلُّونَ الْأَدْبَارَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللهِ مَسْؤُولًا. قُلْ لَّنْ يَنْفَعَكُمُ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوِ الْقَتْلِ

"And when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease began to say: Allah and His Messenger did not promise us (victory) but only to deceive. And when a party of them said: People of Yathrib! There is no place to stand for you (here), therefore go back; and a party of them asked permission of the prophet, saying. Surely our houses are exposed; and they were not exposed; they only desired to fly away. And if an entry were made upon them from the outlying parts of it, then they were asked to wage war, they would certainly have done it, and they would not have stayed in it but a little while. And certainly they had made a covenant with Allah before, that) they would not turn (their) backs; and Allah's covenant shall be inquired of. Say: Flight shall not do you any good if you fly from death or slaughter, and in that case you will not be allowed to enjoy yourselves but a little." (al-Ahzab, 10-16)

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا

"And when the believers saw the allies, they said: This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us, and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth; and it only increased them in faith and submission." (al-Ahzab, 22)

War is Trickery

The Believers were holding strong with all their power. Nuaym ﷺ, a notable of the Ghatafan tribe, who, on the back of the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ advice 'War is trickery' (Bukhari, Jihad, 157; Muslim, Jihad, 17), had kept his acceptance of Islam hidden from the idolaters and managed to put the idolaters and Banu Qurayza on bad terms with one another. An air of hesitation took hold of the coalition of idolaters

over having laid siege on Medina. Each tribe suddenly grew suspicious of each other. The Jews ultimately yielded to Nuaym's persuasive tactics and withdrew to their forts. Now, only the idolaters were left on the field, waiting on the other side of the trenches. Still, the Believers were in a dire situation. Right at the time when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Companions were undergoing a severe trial brought upon by the siege of the idolaters, when hearts had risen up to throats, so to speak, the below *ayah* was revealed:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَّثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَّسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللهِ قَرِيبٌ.

"Or do you think that you would enter Paradise while yet the state of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you; distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said: When will the help of Allah come? Now surely the help of Allah is nigh!" (al-Baqara, 214)[466]

Lifting his hands aloft, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then prayed:

"O Allah who has sent the Glorious Quran! Allah who is haste to bring the enemy into account! Disperse these tribes of Arabs who have gathered before Medina! O my Lord! Break their unity and shake their resolve so that they cannot hold their ground!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 29)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ had only finished his prayer when the Divine aid arrived to put a smile of joy on his delightful face. A blistering, harsh storm began gusting through the enemy ranks; a tempestuous gale that left noting ungrounded in its wake, stifling the idolaters with the dust of the Madinan valley, violently blowing their tents away, turning their food pots over and snuffing out their fires. Beleaguered, their camels and horses began fiercely running into each other.[467]

The idolaters, overwhelmed by the force of the gale sent by the Divine, were left struggling in a state of devastation. Even Abu Sufyan, no doubt the most eager among the idolaters, had no other choice than to say to his soldiers:

"I am returning and by the looks of it, so should you!" He mounted his camel and returned to Mecca, without looking back.[468]

466. See, Tabari, *Tafsir,* II, 464.
467. See, Ibn Saad, II, 71.
468. See, Ibn Hisham, III, 251.

Allah, glory unto Him, had sent his aid to the Believers. Thus is declared in the Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا.

"O you who believe! Call to mind the favor of Allah to you when there came down upon you hosts, so We sent against them a strong wind and hosts, that you saw not, and Allah is Seeing what you do." (al-Ahzab, 9)

وَرَدَّ اللهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْرًا وَكَفَى اللهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ وَكَانَ اللهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا.

"And Allah turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not obtain any advantage, and Allah sufficed the believers in fighting; and Allah is Strong, Mighty." (al-Ahzab, 25)

Taking flight in a dismal and confounded state, the idolaters left behind them many horses, camels, military equipment, foodstuff and belongings, which proved a blessing in disguise for the Believers battling a fierce famine in Medina at the time. Following this enormous victory, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions:

"Now it is your turn! Quraysh will not be able assail you from now on!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 29)

From that day on, the Believers would no longer be on the defensive, for both the pride and power of the idolaters had suffered an irreparable damage. The hearts of Muslims were now echoing with the promising words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ :

"It will be us marching on them from now on!"

The March on Banu Qurayza (23 Dhilqadah, 5 / 15 April, 627)

The Battle of Handak had been won. Forced to swallow their pride, the idolaters had made a low key return to Mecca. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, too, had made his way back home, and as he always did following a battle, removed his armor and took a bath. It was right afterwards that Jibril عليه السلام appeared.

"Have you dropped your weapons?" he asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. "We haven't!"

"That means there is another battle. Where to?" asked the Prophet ﷺ.

Jibril ﷺ pointed towards the quarters of Banu Qurayza, who betrayed the Believers at Handak.

"There to!" he replied. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 30)

Like their fellow Jewish tribes of Medina before them, Banu Qurayza failed to stay loyal to their sworn pact and betrayed the Muslims at the most delicate of times. Indeed, their pact with the Believers required them to provide assistance in defending Medina against the assailing idolaters. Not only did they shrink back in putting up a fight alongside Muslims, they did not leave a stone unturned to devise treacherous plots against the Believers at every given opportunity, no matter how faint. Little did they know that they were really spelling their own ends.

Upon receiving the Divine Command, the Noble Prophet ﷺ immediately gathered the Muslims and signaled they were Banu Qurayza bound.

"Let not anyone, who hears and obeys offer his *asr* salat until arriving at the Banu Qurayza quarters!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 30)

The Muslims thus departed before allowing the Jews to come to grips with the situation awaiting them.

First, a small force under the command of Ali ﷺ, which had moved in advance, met the Jews, who, instead of feeling remorse for the treason they had committed, became all the more aggravated and begun talking ill of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.[469] But once they saw the Muslim army of three thousand men strong making its presence before the forts of Banu Qurayza under the leadership of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, they became tongue-tied. The majesty of the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ presence forced them to renounce all their previous words.

"Enemies of Allah…!" shouted Usayd ibn Khudayr ﷺ. "We will not lift our siege of your forts until you die of hunger. You are like foxes trapped in their den!"

Terrified, the Jews shouted beseechingly from being their forts, "We are your allies, Ibn Khudayr…The allies of Aws, not Khazraj!"

"No more do we have a pact or a treaty with you", said Ibn Khudayr ﷺ in a definite tone. (Waqidi, II, 499)

Nonetheless, before signaling a start to the battle, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ got within an arms distance of the walls of their forts and invited them to Islam. They shied away from accepting.[470]

With the siege ensuing, sending the Jews into much distress, one of their leaders, Kaab ibn Asad proposed to "…pledge allegiance to that man and accept his

469. See, Waqidi, II, 499.
470. See, Abdurrazzaq, V, 216, 370.

prophethood". "There is no doubt", Kaab continued, "that he is the awaited prophet and the man whose attributes we find written in our scriptures. If we declare we believe him, we will be able to receive amnesty!"

"We shall neither depart from the Torah nor take another Scripture in its place", protested the Jews.

His first proposal falling on deaf ears, Kaab then offered to kill their own women and children and enter a life and death struggle with the Muslims or better still, attack them at a least expected time, on Saturday evening, hoping to catch them off guard. Undecided, they accepted none of the proposals[471], for Allah, glory unto Him, had let fear creep into their hearts.

Three young men by the names of Salabah, Usayd and Asad recognized the Prophet ﷺ as carrying the attributes long explained by Jewish scholars as characteristic of the Prophet of the Final Hour. Descending from their forts in the dark of night, they joined the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.[472]

The Jews eventually had to surrender, unconditionally. As the Jews of Banu Qurayza were traditionally in the protection of Aws, compliant with the formal request by the Jews, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent for Saad ﷺ as arbiter. Despite carrying a heavy wound from Handak, Saad ﷺ eagerly heeded the Prophet's ﷺ call. He had after all prayed to the Almighty, upon being wounded, "…not to breathe his last until scores were settled with Banu Qurayza!"

Again, compliant with Jewish requests, Saad ﷺ arrived at a decision in line with the law of Musa عليه السلام.[473] The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, too, confirmed his ruling, commenting, "By Allah, Sad, you have ruled in correspondence with that of Allah above the seven heavens!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 30; Ibn Sad, III, 426)

Saad 's heartfelt prayer was accepted and after he passed judgment regarding the Jews who had stabbed the Believers in the back during the battle, his wound reopened. It was not long afterward that the celebrated Companion, a true devotee of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, breathed his last as a martyr and attained eternal mercy.[474]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ commemorated him by saying, "The Throne of *Rahman* shook over the death of Saad ibn Muadh." (Bukhari, Manaqib'ul-Ansar 12; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 125)

471. Ibn Hisham, III, 254.
472. Ibn Hisham, III, 256.
473. According to the Old Testament, the punishment for such a crime is the execution of all adult males, the appropriation of their possessions as spoils and taking all the women and children captive. (See, the Old Testament, Deuteronomy, 20/10-15)
474. See, Ibn Hisham, III, 271.

Even though Saad was a brawny man, those carrying his funeral only felt a meager weight on their shoulders. "Others are carrying him", explained the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. "By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my life resides, angels have rejoiced over Saad's soul!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 271; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 50/3848)

After leading his funeral salat and burying Saad in his grave, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ continued reciting *tasbihat* for a while. The Companions followed the Prophet ﷺ and joined in. Then the Prophet of Allah ﷺ pronounced a *takbir*.

"Why, Messenger of Allah, did you recite some *tasbih* and then a *takbir*?" the Companions felt compelled to ask.

"Until Allah gave it breadth, the grave squeezed even this righteous servant", replied the Noble Prophet ﷺ. (Ahmad, III, 360)

"Had there been a person immune to the trial of the grave", the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then continued, "it would surely have been Saad. But the grave first squeezed him until Allah gave it breadth." (Tabarani, Mujam'ul-Kaabir, X, 334)

According to the report of Anas ﷺ, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was once presented with an ornamented kaftan as a gift, the beauty and exquisitely soft texture of which many were taken in by. "By He who has Muhammad's life in His Hand of Might", the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ said, "Saad's handkerchiefs in Paradise are more beautiful and worthier than this". (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Khalq, 8; Muslim, Fadail, 126)

The Holy Quran depicts the triumph attained following the Battle of Handak through the help of Allah, glory unto Him, in the following:

وَأَنْزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِى
قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا. وَأَوْرَثَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ
وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا لَّمْ تَطَؤُوهَا وَكَانَ اللهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا.

"And He drove down those of the followers of the Book who backed them from their fortresses and He cast awe into their hearts; some you killed and you took captive another part. And He made you heirs to their land and their dwellings and their property, and (to) a land which you have not yet trodden, and Allah has power over all things." (al-Ahzab, 26-27)

THE SIXTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

The Treaty of Hudaybiyah: The Key to All Victories and the Emotional Road Back to Kaabah

In line with a dream he saw, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ invited the Believers to a journey to Kaabah for pilgrimage.[475] With a total of one-thousand-four-hundred[476] Companions who heeded the invitation, the Noble Messenger ﷺ set out for Mecca, on the first Monday of Dhilqadah, on the sixth year of Hegira. As they were not going for battle, they only armed themselves with swords for self-protection. They also had around seventy camels for sacrifice.[477]

Omar ﷺ asked the Prophet of Allah ﷺ whether he was not concerned over a possible attack by Abu Sufyan and his men, suggesting therefore it might be better for them to carry more weapons than they had intended.

"I am not so sure", replied the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. "I would not want to be armed when having intended for *umrah*." (Waqidi, II, 573)

Upon reaching the *miqat* border of Dhulhulayfah, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ wore an *ihram* and made an intention to perform *umrah*. The Companions followed. They began shouting *talbiyah* aloud, reflecting their burning desire to unite with Kaabah as soon as possible. The spiritual excitement and rapture was taking the Believers closer to their destination at each step.

But an inexpressible anxiety took hold of the idolaters of Quraysh the moment they were informed of the approaching Muslims. In an emergency meeting, they decided not to allow Muslims passage no matter at what cost. A swiftly mobilized unit of two-hundred men under the commands of Khalid ibn Walid and Iqrimah departed Mecca to meet the Believers.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Believers had by now reached Sariyyah, from where it was quite easy to descend into Mecca. But Qaswa, the camel on which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was astride, crouched there and then. All efforts by the Companions to get her moving proved fruitless. They began commenting that the camel had come to a halt.

475. Waqidi, II, 572.
476. Ibn Saad, II, 95. With the joining of Beduoin Arabs on the way, their number is believed to have risen to one-thousand five-hundred, even to one-thousand seven-hundred according to another source.
477. Ibn Saad, II, 95.

"She has not come to a halt; nor does she have a habit of the kind", stated the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. "She has only been stopped by He who has prevented her from entering Mecca!"

He then added, "By He, in whose Hand of Might my life resides, no matter how demanding the conditions Quraysh lay down, in the name of esteeming what Allah has prohibited in His Sanctuary, are, I will surely accept them!"

He then signaled for the camel to move; she virtually soared. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then changed his direction away from Quraysh and descended near an almost dessicate well. This was the furthermost distant point of Hudaybiya from Mecca. The well was all but without water; the meager amount of water it had quickly dried up. The Companions complained to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ over the lack of water. The Prophet ﷺ took an arrow out of his bag and told them to thrust it into the base of the well. Before long, with the will of the Almighty, the well began sprouting with water, continuing to flow generously up until the Companions decided to leave.

In the meantime, Budayl, the leader of the Huzaa Tribe, arrived with a few men. He spoke of the Meccan anxiety and their preparations for war. Despite the seeming apprehension of Quraysh, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ explained Budayl the reason underlying their visit in the following:

"We have not come to fight with anyone. Our purpose is to visit the House of Allah; to perform *umrah*. War has taken its toll on Quraysh…it has worn them out and caused much damage. Should they desire, we could make a treaty for a certain amount of time. That way they will step away from between me and others. Should I triumph over others, then, if Quraysh wishes, she may also enter the Islam that others enter. Should I fail, then Quraysh will have a breather. Should they desist from accepting this offer, then by Allah, I will fight for the sake of this Religion until my head is severed from my body. Surely, Allah will fulfill His promise."

Budayl returned to Mecca and conveyed the words of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ to Quraysh, hearing which Urwa ibn Masud got up and stated, "The man is showing you the path of goodness. Accept his offer and send me to him to make a treaty!"

The notables of Quraysh agreed to send him. The Noble Prophet ﷺ said similar words to Urwa. Throughout, with the corner of his eye, Urwa was inspecting the Companions while the Prophet of Allah ﷺ spoke. When he returned, he animatedly recounted to the idolaters what he saw:

"Listen carefully to me, my fellow people. I swear to you that as an ambassador I have been in the presence of many kings in the past. I have stood facing the Khosrau, the Cesar and the Negus. But never have I seen anything like the devotion and respect the Muslims have for Muhammad! When he wants something, they all

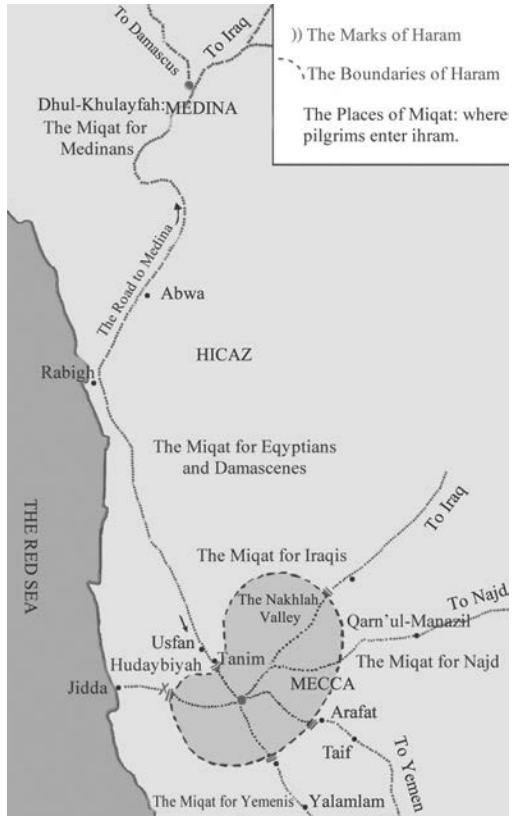
run to get it. If he takes *wudu*, they compete with each other for his water. When he speaks, they all go silent. Out of their respect for him, they lower their gazes and do not look inquisitively at his face, even for a moment. When a strand of hair falls from his head, they quickly take hold of it as keepsake. The man is making a sensible offer. Accept it!"[478]

After Urwah finished what he had to say, another man from the Kinanah tribe asked permission to go to the Noble Messenger, too. So he was sent. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, upon seeing him, said, "Here comes a man from a tribe that appreciates camels spared for sacrifice for *hajj* and *umrah*. Release your sacrificial camels towards him so he can see!"

The man could not help but say, "It does not seem right to hinder them from visiting Kaabah!" (Bukhari, Shurut, 15; Ahmad, IV, 323-324)

Regardless of what the men told them, Quraysh deployed a cavalry unit to launch a raid against the Believers. Although the assailing idolaters were eventually taken prisoner by the Muslims, they were released by the Noble Messenger who wanted to make loud and clear his intention of having come only to offer *umrah*, not to shed blood.[479]

The Prophet's ﷺ tent was set at Hudaybiya, outside the Haram borders. Still, throughout his stay there, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would go within the Haram borders to offer his salats.[480] After all, a salat offered in the vicinity of Kaabah is of greater worth than a hundred thousand others offered anywhere else.[481]



478. Thomas Carlyle feels obliged to confess this truth when he says, "No emperor fashioning a crown on his head has ever received the respect Muhammad received, a man who wore a mantel he patched with his own hands."
479. Muslim, Jihad, 132, 133.
480. Waqidi, II, 614; Ahmad, IV, 326.
481. See, Ibn Majah, Iqamah, 195.

The Pledge of *Ridvan*: A Pledge that Pleased the Almighty

A few more ambassadors from Quraysh visited the Believers in the interim. But because a definite peace agreement could not be secured, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent Othman ﷺ to Mecca, to speak to the idolaters and put an end to the matter, telling him to:

"Go to Quraysh! Tell them that we have not come here to fight with anyone, that we have only come to visit the House of Allah, respecting and observing its sanctity, and that we will slaughter the sacrificial camels we have with us and return! Then invite them to Islam!" The Noble Messenger ﷺ, at the same time, commanded him to talk to each and every Muslim in Mecca, male and female, and herald them with the upcoming *fath* of Mecca, assure them that Allah, glory unto Him, was aiding His religion and that the day in which they will freely proclaim their faith in Mecca was near. (Ibn Sad, II, 97; Ibn, Qayyim, III, 290)

Compliant with the command of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Othman ﷺ immediately went to Mecca and passed on the message to the idolaters. The idolaters were still adamant not to allow passage. Keeping Othman ﷺ under close surveillance, they told him he could circumambulate the Sacred House if he wished. Bu as would befit a devotee of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ of his caliber, he responded:

"I will not until the Messenger of Allah does. I will only visit the Sacred House behind him!" (Ahmad, IV, 324)

Othman ﷺ was detained by Quraysh for longer than expected; so much so that rumors that 'Othman had been murdered' took the Muslims ranks by storm, giving rise to a nervous tension between both sides. Weighing the likelihood that his ambassador may indeed have been murdered, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ gathered all the Companions, telling them, "It seems we will not be able leave without fighting the idolaters!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 364)

He then demanded a pledge from the entire Companions to die in the way of the Almighty if need be. Every single one of them gave a wholehearted pledge of allegieance. (Waqidi, II, 603)

The Believers promised to fight until death in the way of Allah, glory unto Him, by placing their hands above that of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. At the end of the pledge, holding his one hand with the other, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, said, "…and this is Othman's pledge!" (Bukhari, Ashab'un-Nabi, 7)

The pledge given under a tree was known thereafter as the Pledge of *Ridvan* or of Hudaybiya. Bar a single hypocrite, every Companion gave his pledge that day; a pledge that had the Almighty pleased with them:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

"Certainly Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity on them and rewarded them with a near victory." (al-Fath, 18)

Later on, while next to the honorable Hafsa ﵂, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ commented, "Allah willing, none of those who pledged under the tree shall enter Hellfire."

Curious, Hafsa ﵂ felt the urge to ask, "But how will that be, Messenger of Allah, when the Allah the Almighty states:

وَإِنْ مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا

"And there is not one of you but shall come to it; this is an unavoidable decree of your Lord." (Maryam, 71)

To that, the Noble Prophet ﷺ responded by saying, "Allah the Almighty has also stated:

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا وَّنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا.

"And We will deliver those who guarded (against evil), and We will leave the unjust therein on their knees." (Maryam, 72)

Consequently, it became evident that the *ayah* implied, not an actual entrance into Hellfire, but passing it by while crossing the *sirat*. (Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 163)

Jabir ﵁ recounts:

"People were worn out by thirst on the Day of Hudaybiyah, so they came to the Messenger of Allah, who, at the time, had a water container made of leather in front of him. He had just taken *wudu* when people moved closer toward him.

'What is bothering you?' asked the Messenger of Allah.

'We have no water left to drink and to take *wudu* except the little amount in front of us', they explained.

The Prophet of Allah placed his hands inside the container. At the instant, water then began to spring forth from between his fingers; it was exactly like a jetting spring. We all drank and took *wudu* from it."

"How many were there of you that day?" Jabir ﷺ was asked.

"Had we been a hundred-thousand, the water would still have been enough; but at the time, we were one-thousand-five-hundred all up." (Bukhari, Manaqib, 25)

The Treaty of Hudaybiyah: A Brand New Phase in the Call

The idolaters were rattled once they became aware that the Believers had pledged to fight them until death if need be. Terrified from realizing that things were now beginning to get serious, they immediately decided to reach a deal of peace and sent Suhayl ibn Amr to negotiate on their behalf.

Seeing it was Suhayl that had come for the peace talks, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, alluding to the fact that Suhayl means *ease* in Arabic, commented, to the Believers "Matters have now gotten *easy* for you; it is Suhayl!" Thereupon the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ promoted a strategy of peace, in accordance with the Divine Command:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا

"And if they incline to peace, incline you also to it…" (al-Anfal, 61)

The idolaters had the first and foremost aim of preventing the Believers from *umrah*, at least for that year. In addition, they had come to lay down what on the outer seemed to be heavy terms. After a long and at times heated discussion, their terms were accepted.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ conferred to Ali ﷺ the duty of putting the agreed terms on paper. Ali ﷺ was to begin writing the document with *Bismilahirrahmanirrahim* but Suhayl raised an objection. So instead, he wrote *Bismikallahumme*. That was not the last of Suhayl's objections; he also protested against recording the name of the Prophet as 'the Messenger of Allah'.

"Had we accepted you were the Messenger of Allah", he complained, "would we be fighting you and preventing you from visiting Kaabah?"

Vexed as they were over the heavy terms of the treaty, the infuriated Companions had now reached boiling point. Ali ﷺ put his pen aside and exclaimed, "By Allah, I can never erase the term 'Messenger of Allah'!"

"Now matter how much you deny, I am the Messenger of Allah", the Prophet ﷺ then declared to Suhayl. He then asked to be shown the exact place where the

term 'Messenger of Allah' had been written, after which he proceeded to erase it himself with his finger, and asked his name to be written instead: Muhammad ibn Abdullah.

Owing to many underlying wisdoms, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ agreed to the terms laid down by Quraysh; some of which were as follows:

1. The treaty is to be valid for ten years.

2. The Muslims will not visit Kaabah at present and the visit will be postponed to the following year. The pilgrims who will arrive in Mecca the following year shall stay in Mecca for no more than three days, during which the locals, who are to make no contact with Muslims, will have evacuated Mecca.

3. A Meccan seeking asylum in Medina is to be returned, even if he be a Muslim; but a Medinan seeking asylum in Mecca shall not be handed over.

4. The other Arab tribes will be free to side with either the Muslims or Quraysh.

The terms had just been written down when Abu Jandal, the son of the Quraysh ambassador Suhayl ibn Amr, made it next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, dragging his shackle ridden feet. Openly a Muslim, Abu Jandal ؓ had undergone vicious torment at the idolaters' hands. Pouncing on a momentary opportunity, he was able to get away from the idolaters and make it next to the Believers. But Suhayl, striking his son in the face with a stick, interjected, telling the Muslims that Abu Jandal should be the first asylum seeker to be returned to the idolaters, lest they already wished to violate the terms of the treaty. Watching the events unfold in grief, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ insisted Abu Jandal be exempted from the terms of the treaty and be left with the Muslims. Suhayl, with a heart of stone, however, was unyielding. As he was being handed back to the idolaters, Abu Jandal ؓ sent out a heartfelt plea to the Believers, asking for help.

"Will you throw me back into the same fire?" he movingly asked, and it was more than enough to stir the emotions of the already grief-stricken Believers, reducing most of them to tears. It was then that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ affectionately counseled Abu Jandal:

"Be patient a little while more, Abu Jandal; endure! Wait for its reward from Allah the Almighty! There is no doubt that Allah will provide a leeway and breadth for weak, helpless Muslims like you! We happen to have come to a peace treaty with these people and we have have given our word in the name of Allah to observe it. They, too, have given their word in the name of Allah. We cannot be disloyal to our word, for it will not be befitting!" (Ahmad, IV, 325; Ibn Hisham, III, 367)

But still, the Prophet of boundless compassion gave it another try.

"Just leave him with me", he asked Suhayl, once again. Suhayl remained indifferent.

"Then at least take him under your protection", the Prophet of Allah ﷺ then requested. Suhayl did not even accept that. Two other representatives of Quraysh, Huwaytib and Miqraz, worked around the doggedness of Suhayl and assured the Messenger of Allah ﷺ they themselves, for his sake, would take Abu Jandal under their protection and safeguard him of all torment that would otherwise come his way. (Waqidi, II, 608; Balazuri, I, 220)

Thus, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ left somewhat assuaged.

Bursting with a torrent of *iman* in his heart, Omar ؓ, who could no longer put up with the obstinate and conceited attitude of the idolaters, could hardly be contained. In truth, the other Companions, except for Abu Bakr ؓ perhaps, were no different. Omar ؓ had even gone to the extent of speaking out against the approach of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, in hope of evading a treaty that on the surface seemed to be a certain defeat for the Believers. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, however, reminded him that he was only acting in accordance with Divine Command:

"I am the Messenger of Allah", he said, "I cannot rebel against Him. He is my Helper!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 35; Muslim, Jihad, 90-97)

Just as Suhayl was exultantly returning to Mecca following the signing of the treaty with his son by his side, the Noble Messenger ﷺ signaled for his Companions to, "Slaughter your sacrifices and have a haircut!"

Yet, none of the Companions made even the slightest move to fulfill the order. They were grieved and disillusioned amid events whose mystery they could not work out. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ nonetheless repeated his command three times. Again, nobody moved. But this was not, in any way, a rebellion. It was simply a momentary pause, an optimistic anticipation that the treaty, whose ink had still not dried, might be annulled after all. It was a wait spurred by a heartburning yearning for Kaabah. Besides, these were the very same Companions who, just a day ago, had vowed a pledge of death in the presence of their beloved Prophet ﷺ, in the way of Allah, glory unto Him.

The indifference shown by the Companions was nevertheless enormously upsetting for the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who, in a dejected state, resigned inside the tent of his honorable wife Umm Salamah. After he told her of the situation, the prudent Umm Salamah solaced the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and said, "Slaughter your sacrifice, Messenger of Allah, without saying anything to your Companions, and have your

haircut. After you do that, no matter how grief-stricken they are under a burden too heavy for them to carry, they will follow you…Please, excuse them!"

Stepping outside of the tent following this brief talk, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ went ahead and did as was discussed. It was then that the Companions realized that there was no turning back from the treaty and each of them followed the Prophet ﷺ in his actions. They each slaughtered their sacrifices and had their haircuts. Umm Salamah ﵂, who witnessed the situation, later on stated, "The Muslims leaped with such enthusiasm towards the sacrificial camels that I was scared there would be a stampede." (Bukhari, Shurut, 15; Ahmad, IV, 326, 331; Waqidi, II, 613)

Once the Believers completed sacrificing the camels and had their haircut, Allah, glory unto Him, sent a gale that blew all their hairs towards the Haram. The Companions took that as a sign that their *umrah* had been accepted.[482] They then made their way back to Medina.

Afterwards, as the Companions began to fear a Divine wrath over their initial displeasure and indifference over not having grasped the underlying wisdom of the treaty, *surah* al-Fath was revealed:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا. لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا. وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيزًا.

"Surely We have given to you a clear victory. That Allah may forgive your community their past faults and those to follow and complete His favor to you and keep you on a right way. And that Allah might help you with a mighty help." (al-Fath, 1-3)

Mujammi ibn Jariyah ﵁ retells the fright the Companions experienced as al-Fath was being revealed:

"Everyone had disbanded towards their camels, in fright. They were asking each other what exactly was going on. 'The Messenger of Allah has just received a Revelation', some said. Soon, we returned, like the rest, to the Messenger of Allah, in fear. Once everybody had gathered, the Messenger of Allah recited al-Fath." (Ibn Sad, II, 105)

Omar ﵁ has similarly stated, "From fearing the consequences of what I said that day to the Messenger of Allah, in order to have a good ending, I fasted continuously, gave lots of charity, offered supererogatory salats and freed many slaves." (Ibn Sayyidinnas, II, 167)

482. Ibn Saad, II, 104; Halabi, II, 713.

Surah al-Fath was a sneak preview of the gates of victory that were beginning to open ajar for the Believers. It was not that long before the fruits hinted at by the *surah* would begin to be reaped. The neighboring tribes had dubbed the Believers' journey 'a trip without return'. Seeing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his Companions return unscathed, they rushed to him to apologize. Their condition is depicted by Allah, glory unto Him, as follows:

بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَّنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَى أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا
وَزُيِّنَ ذَلِكَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا.
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا.

"Nay! You rather thought that the Messenger and the Believers would not return to their families ever, and that was made fairseeming to your hearts and you thought an evil thought and you were a people doomed to perish. And whoever does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, then surely We have prepared burning fire for the nonbelievers." (al-Fath, 12-13)

On the surface, the terms of the treaty of Hudaybiyah were to the Muslims' disadvantage. Only after the revelation of al-Fath did it become evident that what initially seemed to be a defeat and downfall would, in hindsight, prove to be an evident and lasting triumph. As pronounced in the *ayah*:

وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا
شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

"...and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allah knows, while you do not know." (al-Baqara, 216)

The wisdoms behind this cloudy event, which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ found difficult to explain at the outset, became completely manifest only after two years. The peace environment brought about by the treaty served as a means for numerous people to enter the fold of Islam; so many were they in number that in two years, they exceeded the entire number of pre-Hudaybiyah Muslims.

True, the Muslims were prevented from performing *umrah* that year and had to endure what could be considered as heavy terms for some time. But the gains that

were to come in ht elong run were to be much greater. For the treaty meant that Islam was now officially recognized. They would now only have to wait just another year for a certain visit of Kaabah. Whoever wished to join the Muslims from the surrounding Arab tribes, now could. This only signaled the dwindling of Meccan influence and a breathing space for the Muslim call.

Another reason as to why the Blessed Prophet ﷺ opted for peace was the significant number of people in Mecca who, for the obvious reasons, were practicing Islam in secret. Had a war broken out with the idolaters there and then, in all likelihood, they would have been exposed and consequently massacred.

As a result, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, a prophet of mercy, was sending out hidden signs to the would-be Muslims of both Mecca and the neighboring Arab tribes and warming them to Islam. It was not long before the rewards of this policy were collected.

A Clear Victory: An Ever Increasing Guidance

The idolaters, elated to have had the terms of Hudaybiyah accepted, had in actual fact unknowingly removed one by one the barriers preventing the Believers from extending the call and had placed them in a superior position with their own hands. That nearly none of the Companions were willing to acknowledge the terms of the treaty, thinking they were blatantly to their disadvantage, had cast a further drape in front of Qurayshi eyes, as they signed the treaty with greater enthusiasm, with an air of having won an enormous victory. However, the true nature of the treaty, concealed even to the Believers to begin with, only became manifest in time as the terms were put into practice.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who very well knew right from the start the blessings the treaty had in store, was delicate in keeping to the terms of Hudaybiyah and in making the most of the opportunities provided once they arose. For instance, when a group of Meccan women came to Medina seeking protection, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ refused Qurayshi demands to hand them over on grounds that the relevant term of the treaty applied only to men. Allah, glory unto Him, had in fact commanded against their extradition:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ اَللّٰهُ أَعْلَمُ
بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ وَآتُوهُمْ مَّا أَنْفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا

آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ
وَلْيَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقُوا ذَلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.

"O you who believe! When believing women come unto you as fugitives, examine them. Allah is Best Aware of their faith. Then, if ye know them for true believers, send them not back unto the disbelievers. They are not lawful for them (the disbelievers), nor are they (the disbelievers) lawful for them. And give them (the disbelievers) that which they have spent (upon them). And it is no sin for you to marry such women when you have given them their dues. And hold not to the ties of disbelieving women; and ask for (the return of) that which you have spent; and let them (the disbelievers) ask for that which they have spent. That is the judgment of Allah. He judges between you. Allah is Knower, Wise." (al-Mumtahinah, 10)[483]

Meanwhile, Abu Basir, a Meccan who had now accepted Islam, had come to Medina seeking protection. Compelled by the terms of the treaty, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had no other choice than to hand him over to the idolaters. Like the others, Abu Basir found it difficult at first to make sense with the move. Astonished, he even asked whether the Blessed Prophet ﷺ wanted him to go back to worshipping idols. But as calm as ever, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ assured Abu Basir that they could not turn back on their word, counseling him to "…be patient, for Allah the Almighty will soon show you and others alike a way out."

Abu Basir yielded to the will of the Prophet ﷺ. Putting the wellbeing of Muslims before himself, he surrendered to the idolaters. Still, he was now a dead man walking, for he knew the idolaters were taking him not to Mecca but to death. Knowing this, he put up a fierce resistance when the first opportunity presented itself. Of the two who were taking him, he killed Hunays and watched as the other one fleed. Abu Basir took the dead idolater's clothes, belongings and sword and returned to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

"Take a fifth of these, Messenger of Allah", he said.

'If I do", replied the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "I will not have complied with the terms of the treaty. Your act and the belongings of the man you killed concern you." (Waqidi, II, 626-627)

The idolater, who had fled, also wound up back in Medina asking for Abu Basir.

"You were true to your word when you handed me over to them, Messenger of Allah…but I had to save my life", this time Abu Basir said.

483. See, Bukhari, Shurut, 15; Waqidi, II, 631-632.

Now, beginning to realize the wisdom behind the advice given him by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Abu Basir left Medina and settled in a place called Is, on the shore between Mecca and Damascus. In a short amount of time, Is ended up becoming neutral zone that served as an asylum center for all the runaway Muslims. Very soon, the number of Muslims, including Abu Jandal who was also able to make a successful getaway, reached three-hundred, jeopardizing the vital Meccan trade route to Syria, causing much damage to Qurayshi trade. The idolaters were left with no other choice than to insist the Blessed Prophet ﷺ cancel the relevant term of the treaty. They now demanded the Prophet ﷺ accept Muslim refugees into Medina. Thus, a term that had initially appeared detrimental to Muslim benefit had now proved to be quite the opposite.[484]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon sent a letter to the Muslim community of Is lead by Abu Basir. At the time, Abu Basir happened to be on his deathbed and actually breathed his last as he completed reading the letter. Abu Jandal had him buried where he died and had a mosque built right next to his grave, after which he lead his fellow Believers to Medina, to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.[485]

The peace environment established through Hudaybiyah, a treaty the Almighty describes as a 'clear victory' (*fathan mubinan*) proved a turning point in the acceleration of the Islamic call.[486]

When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ declared Hudaybiyah to be a major triumph, a Companion commented, "We have been prevented from circumambulating Kaabah, from offering our sacrifices inside the Haram, and moreover handed over two people seeking our protection…what sort of a victory could this be?"

The Noble Prophet ﷺ overheard these comments, upon which he described the nature of the victory gained at Hudaybiyah:

"Indeed, this treaty is the greatest victory. The idolaters have agreed for you to come and go into their lands and see to your obligations and for you to be safe as you travel to and fro. Thus they will now see and learn from you the Islam they have detested until now. Allah will make you victorious and you will profitably return from where you enter, safe and sound…And that is the greatest victory of all!" (Halabi, II, 715)

484. See, Bukhari, Shurut, 15; Ibn Hisham, III, 372.
485. See, Waqidi, II, 629.
486. See, al-Fath, 1.

Abu Bakr ﷺ struck a chord with his opinion on the treaty, when he said, "Islam has never seen a victory greater than that of Hudaybiyah. But being shortsighted and narrow-minded, many objected to it. People are haste in matters that are between Allah and His Messenger. But unlike them, Allah the Almighty is not haste and does not carry anything out until the right moment has arrived." (Waqidi, II, 610; Halabi, II, 721)

The first positive result of the treaty was the rapid spread of Islam. Many previously blocked avenues were now wide open for the Call. Muslims were now able to come together with the idolaters and openly talk about and invite them to Islam. Even those who had kept their Muslim faith hidden until then could now fearlessly come out.[487]

Yet before, the two parties could not freely interact with one another, let alone travel freely to Mecca or Medina as they did following the treaty. Both the Believers and the idolaters now exercised the freedom to visit family and friends on either side. The Blessed Prophet's ﷺ behavior, exemplary morals and conduct, as well as his miracles had now come out into the daylight of Qurayshi observation; and along with the corresponding advice eagerly given by the Believers, the idolaters were now finding themselves irrevocably leaning towards Islam. Besides, the Arabs of the desert were practically waiting for the Meccans to become Muslim to follow suit. It was during this period that Meccan notables of the likes of Amr ibn As, Khalid ibn Walid and Othman ibn Talha entered the fold of Islam.[488]

Muslim envoys enjoyed the freedom of visiting any region they wished and explained Islam at every opportunity. The number of Muslims significantly rose during this spell of peace.

Drawing from the relevant ahadith of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, Imam Zuhri evaluates the consequences of the Treaty of Hudaybiyah in the following words:

"Previously, Muslims and idolaters had come into blows whenever they encountered each other. With the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, warfare came to an end. A bond of trust was established between both sides. They were able to meet and fuse with each other, even aiding one another in various matters. In the meanwhile, whenever Islam was raised to someone, after giving it a brief thought, he would grasp the truth and become Muslim; such that the two year period between Hudaybiyah and the conquest of Mecca witnessed a greater number of people becoming Muslim than the entire nineteen year period of the call upto the treaty."

To this, Ibn Hisham adds, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had come to Hudaybiyah with one-thousand-four-hundred Believers. Two years later, he left for Mecca with ten-thousand, and according to another account, with another two-thousand that joined him on the way, making the number twelve-thousand. These statistics attest to the degree of accuracy of Zuhri's remarks." (Haythami, VI, 170; Ibn Hisham, III, 372)

487. See, Ibn Qayyim, III, 309-310.
488. See, Waqidi, II, 624.

THE SEVENTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

Inviting Kings to Islam

Following the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, a *rasul* sent to entire humankind, began inviting all lands within reach, near and far, to Islam. Such was, after all, the Divine Command:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا
الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْض

"Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth…" (al-Araf, 158)

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ
فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ

"O Messenger! Deliver what bas been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people…" (al-Maida, 67)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"And We have not sent you but to all the men as a bearer of good news and as a warner, but most men do not know." (Saba, 28)

The Prophet ﷺ invited these people to Islam through written letters, the most famous of which are six or eight in number. Each letter of invitation was dispatched with a reputable Companion. When the Noble Messenger ﷺ expressed his wish to have letters written to sovereigns, the Companions said:

"They will not read a letter, Messenger of Allah, unless it is sealed." Thus, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had a silver ring made with '*Allah-Rasul-Muhammad*' engraved on it in three vertical lines. He thereafter employed the ring as an official seal.[489]

489. See, Bukhari, Ilm, 7; Muslim, Libâs, 57, 58; Ibn Saad, I, 258.

Engraved on the ring was the appellation '*Muhammadun Rasulullah*', though out of respect, Allah's name had been inscribed above on the first line, followed in the middle by Rasul and then on the bottom line Muhammad.

Dihyat'ul-Kalbi ﷺ took the Prophet's ﷺ letter to Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor. Returning from an emphatic victory against the Persians, Heraclius happened to be in Syria when the letter was eventually delivered to him. Upon receiving the letter, the Emperor was far from irritated, as was a common attitude of conceited kings. On the contrary, the letter aroused in him a deep interest and wanting to investigate further into the nature of this invitation, Heraclius commanded that the fellow townsman of the Prophet ﷺ be brought to his presence, so that he could personally interrogate them.

Heading a group of Meccan merchants, Abu Sufyan, one of the then archenemies of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, just happened to be in Damascus at that time. The Treaty of Hudaybiya was still in effect. They were escorted by the Emperor's men to royal presence. Heraclius, accompanied by his entourage, was at Ilia, in the vicinity of al-Aqsa, when the Meccans were delivered to him. Surrounded by Greek notables, the Emperor accepted the men in his presence and sent for a translator to act as a medium between him and the men of Quraysh.

"Who among you is of the closest kin to the man who says he is a prophet?" asked the Emperor via the translator.

"I am", said Abu Sufyan.

"Bring him and his friends closer to me; but when I am speaking with him, let his friends remain a step behind him", ordered Heraclius. Then turning again to his translator he added, "Tell his friends that I will ask certain question regarding that man. If he begins to speak lies, tell them to give us a signal."

Indeed, Abu Sufyan did in fact confess, later down the track, "Had I not felt any embarrassment over how my friends would speak here and there about the lies I had spun, I would have surely lied about him!" What unfolded thereafter is recounted by Abu Sufyan himself:

"The first question the Emperor then posed was, 'How is his lineage?'

'His lineage among us is eminent indeed!' I replied.

'Was there another man before him who claimed to be a prophet?'

'No', I responded.

'Was there a king among his ancestors?'

'No.'

'Those who follow him…are they from among the notables or the lower classes?'

'They are from the lower classes', I replied.

'Are their numbers rising or dwindling?' Heraclius then inquired.

'They are on the rise…' responded I.

'Are there any people who, after accepting his religion, turn back out of dislike?'

'No!'

'Did you ever accuse him of lying before he made a claim to be prophet?'

'No!'

'Was there a time when he did not keep his promise?'

'No, every promise he makes he keeps. But we have made a peace agreement with him in the time being. We do not know how he will act during this period', I said. I could not find any other words to vilify him except for these!

'Did you fight against him?' then asked Heraclius.

'Yes', I responded.

'What were the outcomes of these battles?'

'On some occasions, he has defeated us; on others, we have defeated him!'

'Well, then what does he command you with?'

'He commands us to worship Allah and Allah only and not ascribe any partners to him and to abandon the idols of our forefathers. He enjoins us with salat, honesty, integrity and seeing to our relatives.'

The Emperor then said some things to his translator, who then translated his words:

"Tell him…I asked you of his lineage and you told me it was of the noblest of among you. Such are prophets. They are sent from among the noblest of their people.

I asked whether there was anybody else before him to have made this claim. You told me there was not. If there was, I could have perhaps said that he was imitating him.

I asked if a king had ever hailed from his ancestry and you told me there had not. Had there hailed a king, I would have said he is trying to reclaim his forefather's dominion.

I asked whether you had ever seen him lie before he made this claim and you replied you had not. I myself know that a person who does not lie to humans can never lie on behalf of God!

I asked if his followers were mainly from the notables or from the lower class. You said they were from the lower class. It is them after all who follow prophets at the beginning.

Are they rising or dwindling, I asked; you said they were increasing. It is a characteristic of true religions for the number of their followers to continually rise.

I asked if there were people who turned away from his religion out of dislike after accepting it and you said there were not. That is what happens once faith spreads out its roots in the heart and becomes entrenched.

I asked if there was ever a time when he failed to keep his word; you said no. Such are prophets. They never turn back on their words.

I asked if you had ever fought against him. You said you did and that sometimes you lost and sometimes you won. At any case, prophets are like that. They undergo trials but victory finally belongs to them.

I asked you what he commanded you with. You said naught but to worship God without ascribing Him any partners, to abandon worshipping idols; and with salat, honesty and integrity.

If what you say is true, then that man will very soon reign sovereign ever over these lands on which I stand now. Besides, I knew of the coming of this Prophet, but little could I have guessed he would hail from among you. If I knew I could make it to his presence, I would undergo troubles of all kinds just to see him. If I were next to him, I would wash his feet."

Heraclius then asked for the letter of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, delivered by Dihya ﷺ to the Governor of Busra, who then had it forwarded to the Emperor. It read:

"From Allah's servant and Messenger Muhammad to Heraclius, the leader of the Romans,

Peace be unto those who follow guidance! I hereby invite you to Islam. Enter Islam, so that you are saved; and Allah will then double your reward! If you decline, then bear the sins of your peasants (who are your subjects).

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلَمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ
إِلَّا اللهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ
دُونِ اللهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

'Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).' (Al'i Imran, 64)

Abu Sufyan reports what unfolded next:

"After Heraclius finished what he had to say and the letter had been read, there erupted a tumultuous uproar; voices were raised from all corners. Thereupon, they took us outside. There, I said to my friends, 'The reputation of Abu Kaabsha's Son[490] has gotten out of hand…even the King of Banu Asfar[491]. (Heraclius) is afraid of him!' It was at that moment that I developed an unswerving belief in his eventual triumph…and eventually Allah granted me guidance, too."

Heraclius then invited all his nobles to royal presence. They all gathered in one of the palaces belonging to the Emperor.

"Byzantines…how would you like it if you received eternal salvation and sovereignty?" the Emperor said to them, implicitly inviting them to Islam. Then, like wild donkeys that have just been frightened, they all ran towards the exit doors, only to see they had all been closed. Realizing his statesmen remained aloof from accepting the call of Islam, Heraclius calmly called them back and turning back from his previous words, said:

"I was only testing your steadfastness and loyalty to Christianity…and I like what I see!" Reassured, the statesmen then bowed to him in appreciation. (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Wahy 1, 5-6, Iman, 37, Shahadat, 28, Jihad, 102; Muslim, Jihad, 74; Ahmad, I, 262)

Letting worldly considerations hold sway, Emperor Heraclius thus denied for himself the blessing of Islam, despite having examined and understood its truth. After having come so close to passing the threshold of an eternal bliss and dominion, he turned away.

490. For the name Abu Kaabshah used for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, refer to v. 1, p. 284
491. Banu Asfar, literally the Children of the Blond, was what the Arabs would sometimes refer to the Byzantines as.

It was Abdullah ibn Huzafah ﷺ who delivered a similar letter to the Persian Khosrau, whose reaction was a far cry from that of Heraclius. Fuming over seeing his name written below that of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, he madly tore the letter to pieces and threw abusive insults at the ambassador.

Abdullah ﷺ kept his composure and pronounced the following to the Khosrau and his statesmen:

"You, Persian people, are passing your numbered days without a Prophet, a Scripture and with control over a mere portion of the earth…You are living the life of a fleeting reverie! The part of earth over which you exercise no influence is indeed far greater.

Many kings have come before you, Khosrau, and ruled with a desire either for the world or the Hereafter. Those who desired the Hereafter also received their shares of the world. As for those who desired the world, they squandered their shares of the Hereafter. Belittle what we offer you as much as you want, but by Allah, wherever you may be, when what you belittle comes to get you, you will be enshrouded in fear and be unable to protect yourself!"

The Khosrau remained indifferent and arrogantly boasted of how sovereignty was his part and parcel and how defeat or the emergence of a rival could not cast fear into him. (Suhayli, VI, 589-590) He subsequently commanded his guards to take Abdullah ﷺ out of the palace.

Abdullah ibn Huzafah ﷺ wasted no time in mounting his ride and striding towards Medina, thinking to himself, "By Allah, I would not worry over what may befall me of the two paths (back to Medina or death), for I have done my duty of delivering the Prophet's letter." (Ahmad, I, 305; Ibn Sad, I, 260, IV, 189; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, IV, 263-6; Hamidullah, al-Wasaiq, p. 140)

Coming to mind here is another account featuring Abdullah ibn Huzafah ﷺ that illustrates his enormous virtue and courage:

During the caliphate of Omar ﷺ, Abdullah ibn Huzafah was part of a Muslim army sent to Syria, to the region of Kaysariyya, to combat the Byzantines, where he was taken prisoner. The Byzantine officials, considering him a prized prisoner, took him to the Emperor, telling he was "…a Companion of the Prophet!"

The Emperor had Abdullah ﷺ locked up in a house where he was deprived from food and water. Afterward, he sent the Companion some wine and pork. They observed Abdullah ﷺ for three days on end; but he laid his hands neither on the wine nor the pork.

"He has really begun to struggle now", the men told the Emperor. "If you do not take him out, he will certainly die!"

The Emperor had Abdullah ﷺ brought to him.

"What is keeping you from eating and drinking what I have sent you?" he asked.

"Though necessity makes it permissible for me to eat and drink from what you have sent me", replied the Companion, "I did not want to turn either myself or Islam into a laughing stock for you!"

Moved by his dignified stance, the Emperor offered Abdullah ﷺ the hand of his daughter and, what's more, governorship, on the condition that he became Christian.

"Even if you were to give me your entire realm and the Arab lands in return for turning away from Muhammad's ﷺ religion just for duration of the blink of an eye," Abdullah ﷺ responded, "I still would not!"

"Then I will have you killed!" threatened the Emperor.

"That is for you to decide!" said Abdullah ﷺ.

The dignified Companion was subsequently hung on a crucifix. The bowmen shot at him but deliberately missed, compliant with the command they had been given, in order to give him a little scare. He was then, once more, given an ultimatum to renounce Islam but that noble Companion kept his head high.

"Either you become Christian", the King shouted from afar, "or I will have you thrown in a boiling cauldron!" When Abdullah ﷺ refused, a copper cauldron was brought, filled with olive oil and water, which was then boiled. The Emperor had another Muslim captive brought, to whom he gave the same ultimatum as Abdullah ﷺ. When he, too, refused, he was brutally thrown directly into the cauldron, in front of the gazing eyes of Abdullah ﷺ. His body instantly disintegrated in the scorching boiling water, as he died the most noblest of deaths.

The Emperor repeated his ultimatum to Abdullah ﷺ. Rejected once more, the Emperor then ordered for him to be also thrown into the cauldron. Right before being thrown, Abdullah ﷺ began to shed tears. Thinking he had a change of heart, the Emperor had the Companion brought to him. There, he repeated his ultimatum but was rejected with anger.

"Then why did you cry?" asked the Emperor, stunned, to which Abdullah ibn Huzafah gave a legendary reply.

"Don't you think that I cried from the fear of what you were about to have done to me. I cried over having only one life to give in the way of Allah. I thought to myself, 'Now you carry one life, which is about to be thrown into the cauldron, and you will die at the instant in the way of Allah. But I would have wanted to have as

many lives as the number of hairs on my body and in the way of Allah, be subjected to the same torment over and over again.'"

The tremendous attitude shown by Abdullah ﷺ with the valor and honor of *iman* greatly affected the Emperor and he wanted to free him.

"Then kiss my forehead and I will let you go", he said.

"Will you then release the other Muslim prisoners with me?" asked the Companion.

"Yes", said the Emperor. "I will!"

Abdullah ﷺ later said "At that moment I thought what harm could there be in kissing the forehead of an enemy among the enemies of Allah, in return for saving both myself and the other Muslim captives?"

That day, eighty Muslim prisoners were released. They explained their ordeal to Caliph Omar ﷺ upon returning in Medina.

"Kissing Abdullah's forehead is a duty upon all Muslims and I shall be the first person to fulfill that duty", exclaimed Omar ﷺ and he got up and kissed Abdullah ﷺ on the forehead. (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, III, 212-213; Dhahabi, Siyar, II, 14-15)

It was thus a Companion of the caliber of Abdullah ibn Huzafah ﷺ to have delivered the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ letter to the Khosrau of Persia; to have courageously lectured him in the royal court, surrounded by henchman waiting for a simple gesture from their Khosrau to execute him.

Hearing the Khosrau had torn his letter and shouted abuses, the Noble Prophet ﷺ remarked, "May Allah tear his dominion apart!" (Bukhari, Ilim, 7; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, III, 212)

The Prophet's ﷺ fateful miracle came true very soon afterwards, during the perioed of the *Khulafa-i Rashidun*, or the Righteous Caliphs, when the entire Persian realm came under Muslim control.

The Khosrau, still vexed, sent an edict to Bazan, the Governor of Yemen, asking him to bring the Prophet ﷺ to him. For that reason, Bazan's envoy arrived next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and handed the Khosrau's letter to him. After having the letter read to him, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ smiled. He then invited the ambassadors to Islam. The ambassadors asked the Prophet of Allah ﷺ to at least write a reply to the Khosrau, if he did not wish to come with them. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, through a Divine inspiration, then told them:

"Allah has set upon Khosrau his son Shirawayh. Shirawayh has killed him in such month, during such night and at such and such time past the night!"

The ambassadors were taken aback. "Should we write down what you said inform the Governor?" they asked.

"Yes", replied the Messenger of Allah. "Inform the Governor with what you have heard and also tell him that my religion and sovereignty will reach beyond the dominion and kingdom of the Khosrau and stretch over the furthermost points where horses and camels tread. Also say to him: If he becomes Muslim, I shall grant him the lands under his governorship and make him king to his tribe of Abna (Persians living in Yemen)!"

When the words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ were eventually conveyed to Bazan, he commented, "I swear this does not sound like the words of a king. I believe this man is a prophet like he says! Anyhow, let's wait for the outcome of what he said regarding the Khosrau. If it turns out to be true, then he is a prophet sent to people by the Almighty. If it turns out be false then we will decide on the measure to take!"

"How did you find him?" Bazan then asked the ambassadors.

"We have never before seen a more majestic yet humble ruler afraid of nothing, despite having no guards around him; who moreover walks on foot like ordinary men! His friends do not raise their voices next to him and they speak in a soft tone…" they said and continued to give a report of what they saw.

They did not have to wait long for the arrival of the imperial letter declaring Shirawayh had killed his father. What's more, the Khosrau's time of death precisely matched the time given by the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Governor Bazan simply remarked, "This man is most certainly a prophet sent by Allah!" The Abna, people of Persian origin living in Yemen, followed their governor in accepting Islam. (Ibn Sad, I, 260; Abu Nuaym, Dalail, II, 349-350; Diyarbakri, II, 35-37)

The Negus of Abyssinia was by far the most hospitable in receiving the letter of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and its deliverer Amr ibn Umayyah ؓ. Together with an open invitation to Islam, the letter sent to the Negus also comprised concise information on Maryam and Isa –upon them peace-. Having more or less already learnt Islam from the Muslims who had previously immigrated to Abyssinia and having adopted an encouraging approach towards it right from the start, the Negus took wing to the horizons of *iman* after receiving the official letter of invitation to the truth. He declared his faith in the presence of Jafar ؓ, the elder son of Abu Talib, who was with him at the time. Then compliant with the wishes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, he boarded the Muslim immigrants on two vessels and had them delivered to the

other side of the Red Sea. He also sent a letter of his own to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, declaring he had become Muslim. It read:

"To Muhammad ﷺ, the Messenger of Allah, from the Negus,

Peace be upon you, Messenger of Allah, and so too the mercy and abundance of Allah. Allah, apart from Who there is no god, has guided me to Islam.

Messenger of Allah…! I have received your letter in which you mention the situation of Isa عليه السلام. By the Lord of the earth and theavens, Isa عليه السلام said nothing more than what you mention regarding him. His invitation was, likewise, as you say. We have learnt the basics of Islam which you are obliged to communicate. We have accommodated your cousin (Jafar) and his friends who immigrated to our lands. I bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah. You are true to your word. You are right and confirmed.

I have sworn allegiance to you, Messenger of Allah, through your cousin, your representative. I have submitted to the Lord of the Worlds in front of him. I hereby send you my son Arha. On only my own soul do I exercise power; and if you want me to come to you, Messenger of Allah, I will do so at the instant. I bear witness that what you say is true. Peace be upon you, Messenger of Allah…" (Ibn Sad, I, 259; Ibn Qayyim, III, 689; Hamidullah, al-Wasaiq, p. 100, 104-105)

It was again during those days that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, asked for a volunteer "…to deliver a letter to the Muqawqis[492] of Alexandria, expecting its rewards from Allah" Khatib ibn Abi Baltaah رضي الله عنه rose to his feet, at once, and volunteered to deliver the letter.

"May Allah make this mission holy for you", prayed the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

Khatib رضي الله عنه took the letter to the Muqawqis of Alexandria. The letter read:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate,

From Allah's Servant and Messenger Muhammad, to Muqawqis, the Leader of the Copts,

Peace unto those who follow guidance and keep to the right path. I hereby invite you to Islam. Become Muslim and find peace so that Allah doubles your reward. If you do not accept this invitation, then you shall bear the sins of the Copts.

492. An emperor of Byzantine was referred to as Caesar, a ruler of Persia as Khosrau, a king of Abyssinia as Negus, a sovereign of Egypt as Pharaoh; likewise, a governor of Alexandria was known as Muqawqis, a king of India as Batlimus and a king of Yemen as Tubba. These are general appellations not to be confused with particular names. (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, XI, 228)

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلَمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

'Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).' (Al-i Imran, 64)"

Once the Prophet's ﷺ letter had been read, the Muqawqis told Khatib ﷺ to approach him, gathering at the same time his prominent high priests. Khatib ﷺ recounts what happened afterwards:

"The Muqawqis told me he wanted to talk to me ask me certain things he wished to find out. 'Certainly…Ask away', I told him.

'Is not your master a prophet?' he asked.

'Most certainly…he is the Messenger of Allah', I responded.

'If he really is the Messenger of Allah, then why did he not curse his people who forced him to migrate from his hometown and seek refuge elsewhere?' he then inquired. To that I responded with a question of my own.

'You would bear witness that Isa, son of Maryam, was a prophet of Allah, would you not? Now since he was, could he not have asked his Lord to destroy his people when they wished to execute him, instead of being lifted to the heavens?'

The Muqawqis was lost for words. After a brief silence, he told me to repeat what I had just said. I did. He went silent again.

'You said well', he then commented. 'You are a wise man, who measures what he says; and from next to a wise man you come from!' Encouraged, I then spoke the following.

'There lived a man in these lands before you, who claimed to be the greatest lord. Then Allah the Almighty seized that pharaoh and punished him with the torment of both the world and the Hereafter. Take a lesson from those before you, so that you do not serve a lesson for others!'[493]

493. As has been beautifully expressed in the proverb: One who fails to take lessons from history will be a lesson for posterity.

'We already have a religion', he then remarked, 'and we will not abandon that unless we are offered something better!'

'Islam is definitely superior to the religion you are following now! We call you to Islam, to which Allah the Almighty has chosen as religion for mankind. Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ invites not only you, but also the entire humankind. The most vulgar and brutal towards him were the folk of Quraysh. The most malicious towards him have been the Jews. The closest to him, on the other hand, have been the Christians. Just as Musa عليه السلام heralded Isa عليه السلام, Isa عليه السلام heralded Muhammad ﷺ. Our inviting you to the Quran is like you inviting the followers of the Torah to the Bible. Each one is obliged to follow the prophet of his time…and you happen to have made it to the time of Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ. We therefore do not distance you from the religion of Isa عليه السلام when we invite you to Islam. Much the opposite, we call you to act in accordance with his prophethood.'

To that, the Muqawqis replied:

'As far as I can see, the religion of this prophet neither commands abandoning the world nor prohibits the acquisition of those things which are accepted and desired. He seems to be neither a bewildered magician nor a liar who claims to receive news from the unknown. Much rather he carries signs of a prophet like having the unknown revealed to him and informing things before they ever happen. But still, I would like some more time to think.'

Later, he had the following written in response to the letter I had brought:

'In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate,

To Muhammad ibn Abdullah, from the Muqawqis,

Peace unto you! I have read your letter and have understood that which you mention and invite me to. I knew another prophet would come but I had been expecting him from around Damascus. I have hosted your ambassador. I am hereby sending you two slave-girls regarded highly among the Copts and some clothes; and also a mule for you to ride on, as present. Peace unto you!'

The Muqawqis did nothing more; neither did he accept Islam. On my way out, he said, 'Whatever happens, let not the Copts hear a word from you!'" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, IV, 266-267; Ibn Sad, I, 260-261; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, III, 530-531)

Evidently, the Muqawqis received the Prophet's call amicably. He had been anticipating the arrival of the final prophet, yet had been expecting him from around the vicinity of Damascus. This supposition ended up veiling him from accepting the truth and subsequently the Muqawqis never became Muslim. But with Khatib رضي الله عنه, he sent a ride and two slave-girls, the honorable Mariyah and her sister Sirin.

During the return journey, Khatib ﷺ made sure to introduce the two sisters with Islam, heartening them to become Muslim; and as a result, they did.[494] They understood the eternal truth even before stepping foot inside Medina.

Once Khatib ﷺ conveyed the words of the Muqawqis, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ remarked, "The wayward man could not forfeit his rule…but what he could not forfeit shall not remain with him." (Ibn Sad, I, 260-261; Diyarbakri, II, 38)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ had Sirin wed to Hassan ibn Thabit ﷺ, while he himself married Mariyah, who later gave birth to his son Ibrahim. This wedding, contracted through Divine Will, reaped a number of political benefits. This left a long-lasting imprint on the Egyptians and had a lot to do in their deserting the Byzantines in their wars against the Muslims that were to take place in later years, enabling the Believers to march to victory with more confidence.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave the following advice to his Companions, exemplifying the ideal conduct towards relatives:

"You shall conquer Egypt, a land where they use a scale called *qirat*. I advise you to treat its people with kindness. Keep my will, for we are their kins, of both ancestry and marriage." (Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 226-227)

As known, the lineage of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ reaches Ismail عليه السلام; and as Hajar, Ismail's عليه السلام mother, was from Egypt, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ regards Egyptians as his relatives. As for the marital kinship, that comes from the honorable Mariyah.[495]

Harith, the chieftain of the Ghassanid Arabs of Syria, acted arrogantly towards the Prophet's ﷺ letter delivered by Shuja ibn Wahb ﷺ. He even asked an official permission of the Emperor of Byzantine to march on the Muslims. But the request was rejected.[496]

Hawza, the leader of Yamamah, also denied the prophetic invitation conveyed by Salit ibn Umayr ﷺ. He died in the throes of his ignorance only a short while later.[497]

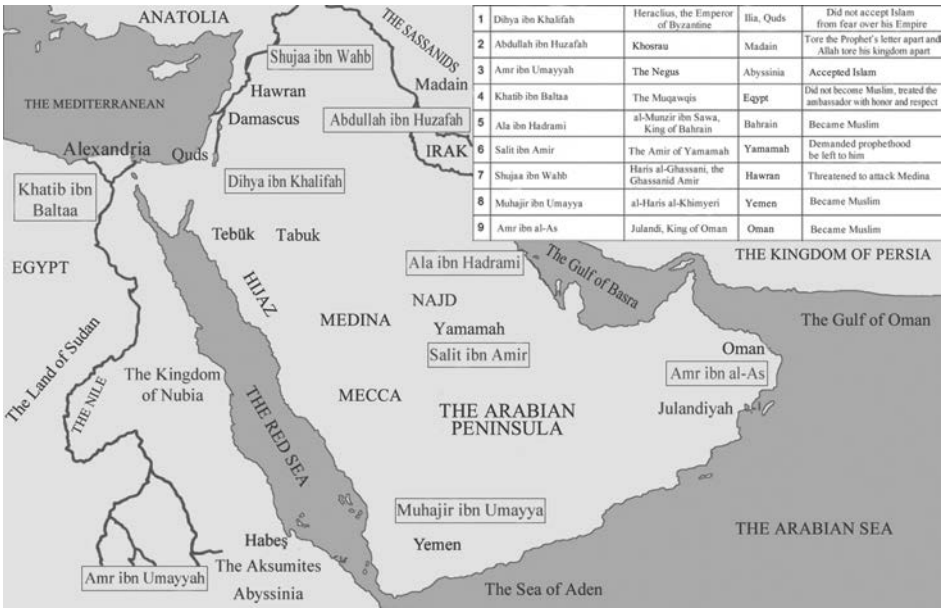
494. Ibn Saad, VIII, 212.
495. Ibn Hisham, I, 4.
496. Ibn Saad, I, 261.
497. Ibn Saad, I, 262.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave important advices to each of his ambassadors prior to sending them. For instance, before having a letter delivered to the folk of Khimyar, he advised Iyash ﷺ with the following:

"If you arrive there at night, wait until morning to enter. Then take *wudu* in the best manner and offer two *rakahs* of salat. Pray to Allah for success and to be pleasantly received. Then prepare yourself, take my letter in your right hand and present it with your right hand to their right hand. If you do that, they shall accept you…"

Iyash ﷺ states, "I did exactly as the Messenger of Allah advised. They ended up becoming Muslim. The later events, too, unfolded in the exact manner he had foretold." (Ibn Sad, I, 282-283)

These invites were the first steps Islam took towards embracing the entire world from Medina. Having come alive in the Arabian Peninsula, Islam continued to grow by the day. After all, the sturdy foundations of the triumphant walk were being laid by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself.


ANATOLIA
THE SASSANIDS
Shujaa ibn Wahb
Madain
Hawran
THE MEDITERRANEAN
Damascus
Abdullah ibn Huzafah
IRAK
Alexandria
Quds
Khatib ibn Baltaa
Dihya ibn Khalifah
Tebūk
Tabuk
EGYPT
Ala ibn Hadrami
The Gulf of Basra
THE KINGDOM OF PERSIA
HIJAZ
NAJD
MEDINA
Yamamah
The Gulf of Oman
Salit ibn Amir
Oman
Amr ibn al-As
The Land of Sudan
THE NILE
The Kingdom of Nubia
THE RED SEA
MECCA
THE ARABIAN PENINSULA
Julandiyah
Muhajir ibn Umayya
THE ARABIAN SEA
Habeş
Yemen
Amr ibn Umayyah
The Aksumites
Abyssinia
The Sea of Aden
1 Dihya ibn Khalifah — Heraclius, the Emperor of Byzantine — Ilia, Quds — Did not accept Islam from fear over his Empire
2 Abdullah ibn Huzafah — Khosrau — Madain — Tore the Prophet's letter apart and Allah tore his kingdom apart
3 Amr ibn Umayyah — The Negus — Abyssinia — Accepted Islam
4 Khatib ibn Baltaa — The Muqawqis — Egypt — Did not become Muslim, treated the ambassador with honor and respect
5 Ala ibn Hadrami — al-Munzir ibn Sawa, King of Bahrain — Bahrain — Became Muslim
6 Salit ibn Amir — The Amir of Yamamah — Yamamah — Demanded prophethood be left to him
7 Shujaa ibn Wahb — Haris al-Ghassani, the Ghassanid Amir — Hawran — Threatened to attack Medina
8 Muhajir ibn Umayya — al-Haris al-Khimyeri — Yemen — Became Muslim
9 Amr ibn al-As — Julandi, King of Oman — Oman — Became Muslim

The Spell Cast on the Blessed Prophet ﷺ by the Jews

It was during those days when the Jewish leaders made a proposal to the crafty magician Asam ibn Labid, on the surface a Muslim, yet carrying on his Jewish belief in secret.

"You are our most skillful magician", they said. "Muhammad has cast a spell on our men and women and we can not do anything about it. You have seen what

he has done to us; how he has defied our religion, killed and sent into exile many of our own. For all the damage he has caused us, we entrust you with the duty of punishing him by casting on him a spell!" They paid Asam ibn Labid three dinars of gold for the mission.

Ibn Labid set himself to the task immediately and began looking for ways of obtaining a few strands of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ hair. Somehow he did manage to get hold of what he was after. Tying certain kinds of knots on the hairs and blowing into them, he placed it in a dried shell of the flower of a date. He then placed it under a stepping stone inside the Zarwan Well. Right after the spell, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ fell ill. The light of his eyes faded away. The illness that ensued for days on end reduced his appetite and he was not able to eat and drink anything.

Allah, glory unto Him, informed his Prophet ﷺ the identity of the person who had put a spell on him and the whereabouts of the knotted hairs. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thus sent Ali and Ammar ﷺ to the Zarwan Well. They both drew the water from inside, which had turned red, like henna, and completely emptied the well. Lifting the stepping stone inside, they found the knots underneath.

In the meantime, Jibril ﷺ brought the two *suwar* of al-Falaq and an-Nas. With the Prophet's ﷺ recital of each *ayah*, a knot of the spell became undone; and with the reciting of the very last *ayah*, the Noble Messenger ﷺ felt an instant relief, like he had been freed from a rope. He regained his appetite. He subsequently had the Zarwan Well closed. As for Ibn Labid, neither did the Blessed Prophet ﷺ summon him nor did he mention his crime and hold it against him. Not only did he not punish Ibn Labid, clearly guilty of attempting to take his life, he did not even hold a personal grudge against Ibn Labid's tribesmen, the Jews of Banu Zurayq.[498]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ one day stated, "Abstain from the seven destroyers!"

"What are they, Messenger of Allah?" asked the Companions.

"Ascribing partners to Allah, casting spells, unjustly taking a life that Allah has declared untouchable, indulging in usury, usurping the possessions of an orphan, fleeing from the battlefield and charging chaste and innocent women with adultery…" (Bukhari, Wasaya, 23; Muslim, Iman, 145)

In another *hadith*, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ declares:

"Whoever ties a knot and blows in it, has cast a spell. Whoever has casted a spell has fallen into *shirk*." (Nasai, Tahrim, 19)

498. See, Ibn Saad, II, 197; Bukhari, Tıbb, 47, 49; Muslim, Salâm, 43; Nasai, Tahrîm, 20; Ahmad, IV, 367, VI, 57; Aynî, XXI, 282.

"The salat of an *arraf*[499], who gives news of the whereabouts of a stolen and lost property, and who asks him something and confirms what he says, will not be accepted for forty days." (Muslim, Salam, 125)

The Final Blow to Jewish Mischief: The Conquest of Khaybar (Safar-Rabiulawwal, 7 / June-July, 628)

The Jews of Khaybar had joined the hypocrites in taking the Treaty of Hudaybiyah at face value and assuming it to be a supposed reflection of the inner weakness of Muslims. Incited by the many exiled Jews who had taken refuge in their forts, a great fire of antagonism soon took Khaybar in its flames. The Jews promised to give half their yearly crops to the tribe of Ghatafan, provided they joined forces with them against the Believers. With Ghatafan more than ready and prepared to collaborate, they quickly thought of ways to put their forces into effect. Sending an army to Medina was the proposed scheme.[500]

To curb Jewish hostility, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ to Khaybar to ensure peace. The Companion soon returned with an unwelcoming refusal. A battle had become inevitable and a march on Khaybar was now imminent. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ declared:

"Let only those who want *jihad* join us!" (Ibn Sad, II, 92, 106)

Medina, on another note, was located right between Mecca and Khaybar; and thus each time there was a war with Mecca, Khaybar always posed a potential threat from behind.

The Companions enthusiastically heeded the Blessed Prophet's call. However, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ did not allow entry for those who were not present at Hudaybiyah. The Muslim army had suffered on more than an occasion, in the most delicate of times, from the betrayals of hypocrites, who had previously somehow managed to sneak in during previous campaigns with the sole incentive of acquiring spoils. The same people now desperately wanted to join, in hope of laying their hands on the dazzling riches of the Khaybar Jews. They were thus denied. Besides, that was the Will of the Allah, glory unto Him:

قُلْ لَّنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا

499. A *kahin*, or a soothsayer, is a person who claims knowledge of future happenings. Although from one perspective an *arraf* is also a *kahin*, the term is reserved for a person who gives information on stolen or lost property. There is also a *munajjim*, or an astrologer, who, too, is a *kahin*, with the difference that a he claims knowledge of future events by observing stars.

500. See, Waqidi, II, 530-531, 566, 640; Ibn Saad, II, 92.

"…Say: You shall never tag along with us!" (al-Fath, 15)

The Muslim preparation for Khaybar cast anxiety over the remaining Jews in Medina, still bound to a treaty with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. They had a hunch feeling that their fellow Jews of Khaybar were awaiting a similar loss that had previously befallen Qaynuqa, Nadir and Qurayza. In hope of perhaps weakening the Believers, every Jew in Medina who had a Muslim owing him money asked for an immediate payment. The below incident, together with attesting to this change of circumstance, also exemplifies the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ sensitivity in observing the rights of others:

Abu Shahm, a Jew, had Abdullah ibn Hadrad ؓ owing him five dirhams for some barley he had sold. When Abu Shahm abruptly asked him to close his debt, Ibn Hadrad ؓ, urged him to give him "…a little more time. Allah willing, I will close my debt, for the Almighty has promised His Messenger the spoils of Khaybar. We are going to the richest town in the whole of Hijaz!"

These words only fueled the anger and jealousy of the Jew.

"Do you think the Jews of Khaybar are like the Arabs you have fought until now? I swear on the Torah that there are ten-thousand warriors there!"

"You enemy of Allah", replied Ibn Hadrad ؓ, "you are forgetting you live under our protection. By Allah, I will take you to the Messenger of Allah!" He then took him by the arm and brought him to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"Listen to what this Jew is saying, Messenger of Allah", he then said, recounting to him the words of Abu Shahm. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ kept silent and did not say a word. They could only observe a slight movement of his lips but they were unable to make out what he said.

"He has committed injustice against me, Abu'l-Kasim", complained the Jew. "He has not closed his debt!"

"Give him what is his due", the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told Ibn Hadrad.

Ibn Hadrad spoke of his poverty and assured he would pay Abu Shahm off with the spoils of Khaybar. Still, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ repeated his command twice. Thereupon Ibn Hadrad ؓ went to the bazaar. When he returned, he had taken the clothes of his back and enshrouded himself in his *imamah*.

"I will sell you my clothes", he said to the Jew, who agreed to buy them for four dirhams with which he was able to close off his debt. (Ahmad, III, 423; Waqidi, II, 634-635)

As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was leading the army of Companions towards Khaybar, he was seeking refuge in the Almighty, like always, with the following prayer:

"Allah, the Lord of the seven heavens and what is under, the seven earths and what is inside, of the devils and whom they lead astray, the winds and what they hurl! We ask from You the good of this town, its dwellers and what is inside of it! And we seek refuge in You from the evils of this town, its dwellers and what is inside of it!"[501] (Ibn Hisham, III, 379; Waqidi, II, 642)

On the way, the Companions began to shout *takbir*, in the form of '*Allah-u Akbar Allah-u Akbar; La ilaha ill-Allah-u w-Allahu Akbar*!' The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then urged them to "Have mercy on yourselves, for you are not addressing one who is deaf; nor is your collocutor absent! You are addressing One who Sees and Hears you, and is with you wherever you may be. The One who you pray, is closer to each of you than the neck of his mount!" (Bukhari, Daawat, 50, 67; Muslim, Dhikr, 44)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ arrived at Khaybar at night and waited until daybreak, appropriate to his custom of never launching an onslaught at night and always waiting until morning, to strike. Come morning, the Jews left their forts with their shovels and picks, to work at their fields as usual. But seeing the Muslim army encamped right in front of their forts, they ran back inside, screaming, "It is Muhammad… Muhammad and his army!"

Thereupon the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "*Allah-u Akbar*…Destroyed is Khaybar! When we descend on their land, awful shall then be the morning of those who were warned!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 38; Ibn Hisham, III, 380)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ set up his camp right at Raji, between Ghatafan and Khaybar, thereby cutting the access of the two allies with one another and preventing their planned, mutual aid. In fact, when Ghatafan did make an attempt to help the Jews compliant with their requests, they had no other choice than to return, in fright, seeing their path had been cut by the Believers. Forced to battle the Muslims all on their own, the Jews of Khaybar, on the other hand, retreated into their forts.

Someone during the siege had spread rumors among the Jews to incite them to take arms against the Muslims, as indicated by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ :

"A devil came to the Jews and said, 'Muhammad is fighting you only to take possession of your wealth!' Call out to them, 'Say *La ilaha ill-Allah* and therewith protect your wealth and blood…as to your trial in the Hereafter that is upto Allah!'"

The Jews were called out to in that fashion but their response was, "By the Torah of Musa which we have with us, neither will we do what you want us to do, nor will we leave our religion!" (Waqidi, II, 653)

501. This is a prayer the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to always say right before entering a given settlement, when he saw the settlement from a distance. (Hakim, I, 614/1634)

The siege lasted for days. The Believers had almost run out of supplies. The Battle was becoming really severe. Muslims were giving many casualties, while many others were carrying heavy wounds. Regardless, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had only calling people to Allah, glory unto Him, in mind. An incident during the siege of Khaybar, which goes to show that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ never saw anyone unimportant when it came to calling them to Islam, saw the Prophet of Allah ﷺ explain Islam, at length, to a slave herding some sheep belonging to a Jew near the forts, eventually guiding him to the light of truth.[502] Such was how it all unfolded:

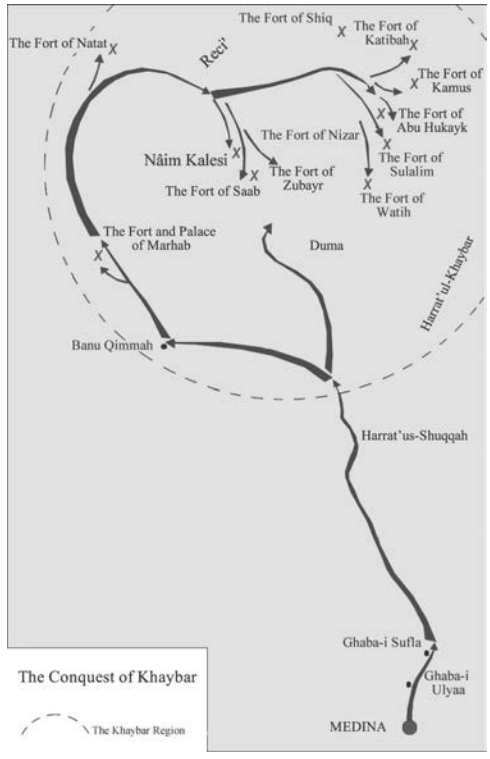
Yasar, who used to earn his living through shepherding of a herd of sheep belonging to a Jew, came across the Blessed Prophet ﷺ one morning while herding outside the walls of the fort. After some talking, Yasar decided to become Muslim and changed his name to Aslam on the Prophet's ﷺ recommendation. He then asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as to what to do with the sheep entrusted in his care.

"Turn them back and chase them!" advised the Noble Messenger ﷺ. "Have no doubt…they shall all return to their owner."

Aslam then grabbed a handful of pebbles from the ground and flung them towards the sheep, shouting, "Go on; return to your owners…By Allah, we are parting ways forever!"

The sheep meekly turned back in unison and entered the fort, as if someone had been guiding them along. Aslam then joined the rest of the Muslims in their battle beneath the walls of the fort.[503]

Taking active part in the battle the instant he became Muslim, Aslam ﷺ was martyred a short while later. His corpse was subsequently brought to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who, staring at the deceased Aslam for a while with a group of Companions around him, suddenly turned his face towards another direction. When asked for the reason, he explained:



502. Ibn Hisham, III, 398.
503. Ibn Hisham, III, 397-398; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah,* I, 38-39.

"He is now with his two wives of the lovely-eyed houris!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 398; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, I, 38-39)

At a stage when the Battle had really begun to test the Believers' forbearance, as they were becoming overwhelmed with fatigue from having all their onslaughts repelled, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ announced:

"Tomorrow, I shall give my flag to someone through whose hands Allah will grant the fall of Khaybar. He loves Allah and His Messenger and Allah and His Messenger love him…"

The Companions present at the battle spent the night wondering and speculating who would end up with the Prophet's ﷺ flag. With the break of day, they all rushed next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in hope of being the one to have attained the love of Allah, glory unto Him, and His Messenger. So lively was their enthusiasm that Omar ؓ later confessed, "I have never wished to be commander more than I did that day. I kept on trying to make myself noticed hoping the Messenger of Allah would call me!"

To give the flag, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ultimately sent for Ali ؓ, who, carrying an illness of the eye at the time, had to be carried to the Prophet's ﷺ presence; he could not even see in front of him. Seeing Ali ؓ struggling to see, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ breathed into his eyes and with the permission of the Almighty, 'the Lion of Allah' was healed. The Noble Messenger ﷺ then donned him in armor and handing the flag to him, said:

"Advance now, Ali…and do not look left or right until Allah grants you the *fath*!"

Ali ؓ pressed forward instantly and then stopped. He then asked, without looking behind, "What shall I fight them for, Messenger of Allah?"

"Fight them until they bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger. If they accept, unless they commit what the religion forbids, they will have protected their wealth and blood from you, and their true accounts will remain for Allah to settle. Approach them slowly and calmly. First, invite them to Islam. A single person guided through your call is better for you than to be given red camels!" (Bukhari, Ashab'un-Nabi, 9; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 32-34; Haythami, VI, 151)

The Jews' most famed warriors were all slain that day. Khaybar fell, with all its eight forts, two of which surrendered without fighting. What the Blessed Prophet ﷺ

previously foretold came true. The Jews had ninety-three casualties in total, compared to the fifteen Muslim martyrs.[504]

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ explains:

"We were with the Messenger of Allah at the Khaybar Campaign. Regarding one who used to say he was a Muslim, the Messenger of Allah said, 'He is in Hellfire'. When the battle eventually broke out, that man fought valiantly and received a heavy wound. Some Companions informed the Messenger of Allah, saying, 'the man who you just declared to be in Hellfire has fought courageously and died!' The Messenger of Allah, again, said, 'He has gone to Hell!'

Some Muslims were in the verge of falling into doubt following the response. And then, a short while later, they told the Messenger of Allah that the man had not yet died after all but is lying with a fatal wound. At night, the man could no longer bear the pain and pushing his body against the sharp edge of the sword, committed suicide. The Messenger of Allah was made aware of the situation.

'*Allah-u Akbar*…! I bear witness that I am a servant and messenger of Allah', he said. He then commanded Bilal ﷺ to announce, 'Only Muslims will enter Paradise. This much is certain that Allah strengthens this religion with a sinner, too.'" (Bukhari, Jihad, 182, Maghazi, 38; Qadar, 5; Muslim, Iman, 178)

Following the victory at Khaybar, the Jews wished to remain working on their lands in return for giving half the produce. So, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ did not send all the Jews into exile. On the condition that he could expel them when he saw fit, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ accepted the Jews' offer of working on these fertile lands and receiving half of the entire harvest. These Jews remained on the land until the caliphate of Omar ﷺ.[505]

Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ was assigned to go to Khaybar each year to estimate and collect half the harvest from the Jews as agreed. So irritated the Jews soon became with the diligence and precision of Ibn Rawaha ﷺ in estimating the crops, that they even offered to bribe him to be shown a little lenience.

"For all that you have done, you are, by Allah, the most despicable to me among the entire creation of Allah. Still, that does not prevent me from being just towards

504. In allusion to the event, Sayyid Sayfullah says,
"Praise not the bad for a loaf of bread, for that is ignorance, bleak,
Destroy your Khaybar like self, for that is courage at its peak…"

505. Muslim, Musaqat, 5; Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 23-24/3007.

you. What you offer me is a bribe; and indulging in bribery is impermissible. We do not touch that!" Ibn Rawaha ﷺ pronounced.

"'It is with such justice", replied the Jews in admiration, "that the skies and earth remain in order!" (Muwatta, Musaqat, 2)

Sensitivity towards the Rights of Others

The spoils of Khaybar were distributed among those present at Hudaybiyah, irrespective of whether they were at Khaybar or not, as Allah, glory unto Him, had promised the riches of Khaybar to Muslims present at Hudaybiyah through the 20th *ayah* of *surah* al-Fath.[506]

Omar ibn Khattab ﷺ explains the following:

"It was on the day of the Battle of Khaybar. A group from the Companions of the Messenger of Allah came and began announcing those who had been martyred. Then walking past another casualty, they said, 'so and so has also been martyred.'

'No!' intervened the Messenger of Allah. 'I saw him in Hellfire in a mantle he had unjustly seized from the spoils!'" (Muslim, Iman, 182)

Despite being one of the highest ranks attainable which compensates for the majority of the sins a person may bear, even martyrdom cannot atone for intruding on the rights of other human beings by usurping common property. Informing that the Companion announced as a martyr would be punished in Hellfire for a mantle he had seized without right, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereby taught his *ummah* that usurping common property and intruding on the rights of others is an unforgivable offense.

There was a black slave by the name of Midam, presented as gift by Rifaa ibn Zayd, who used to see to the service of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. He was struck and killed by a strayed arrow while unloading the baggage of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. The Believers naturally rejoiced Midam's death; after all he looked to be martyred. They were told otherwise by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

"No, it is not what you think. By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my life resides, a rug he seized on the day of Khaybar before the spoils were distributed is going up in flames on him as we speak!"

The Believers were terrified. A man came to the Noble Messenger ﷺ and handing him one or two shoe laces, said, in embarrassment:

"I had seized these, Messenger of Allah, for my shoes, before the spoils were distributed…"

506. Waqidi, II, 684.

"Then one or two shoelaces of Hellfire for you…" responded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. (Bukhari, Ayman, 33; Muslim, Iman, 183)

On the day Khaybar fell, a man came to the Blessed Messenger ﷺ and claimed to have made "…a profit greater than what the dwellers of this valley could never imagine."

"Is that so? What did you make?" asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

'I just kept on buying and selling without break, until I was able to make a profit of three-hundred *uqiyya*!"

"Should I tell you of the best of profits?" then ask the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"Yes, Messenger of Allah, do tell…"

"A salat of two *rakahs* right after the obligatory (*fard*) salat…!" (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 168/2785)

Upon receiving the commodities and date fields of Khaybar that fell to their lot, the *Muhajirun* were able to improve their conditions financially, owing to which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ returned to the *Ansar* the date fields and trees they had previously either given or lent for use to the *Muhajirun*.[507]

The Arrival of Daws in Medina

Meanwhile, a group from the tribe of Daws came to Medina. Their leader Tufayl ibn Amr had already come to Mecca during the nascent years of Islam and had accepted Islam after speaking with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Then receiving permission from the Prophet ﷺ to return to his people, he had begun inviting them to Islam. Abu Hurayrah ؓ was the first to respond to his call.[508] The number of Muslims gradually increased thereafter, reaching seventy to eighty households, all of whom migrated to Medina during the Battle of Khaybar. Proceeding straight to Khaybar from there, they joined the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in battle.

Abu Hurayrah ؓ became really impatient during the journey, anxious and raring to meet the Blessed Prophet ﷺ as soon as possible. He was reciting the below verse of a poem on the way:

"O the night of journey! I am tired of your length and hassle…But it is you saving me from the land of disbelief and denial!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 75; Waqidi, II, 636)

507. Ibn Qayyim, III, 359.
508. Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah,* II, 226.

By the time Abu Hurayrah ﷺ arrived at long last to Khaybar with the rest of his tribesmen of Daws, Khaybar had already fallen.[509] When the Noble Prophet ﷺ saw him, he asked where he was from.

"Daws", replied Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, whereupon the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stated, "I have seen only goodness in whoever I have come across from Daws!" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 46/3838)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ allocated a share of the spoils of Khaybar to the natives of Daws.[510]

The Return of the Immigrants of Abyssinia

As Khaybar was falling, a group of sixteen Companions headed by Jafar ﷺ were returning from Abyssinia to Medina. Upon finding out that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was at Khaybar, the immigrants immediately proceeded there, and were soon united with him.

"You resemble me so much in appearance and behavior", the Blessed Prophet ﷺ first commented upon seeing Jafar. He then added, "I do not know as to what is supposed to make me happier: the fall of Khaybar or the return of Jafar!" (Ibn Hisham, III, 414)

Jafar ﷺ was inexpressibly delighted to receive the precious compliments of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, and like an innocent child, he ecstatically started turning, on one foot, around the Prophet of Allah ﷺ until losing control.[511]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not forbid Jafar ﷺ from doing this. Some *tariqah*, or Sufi orders, later took this as an affirmation (*sunnat'ut-taqriri*) of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and as a precedent for *wajd* or the state of ecstasy.[512]

Arriving alongside the immigrants was also the Ashari Tribe of Yemen. Among them was Abu Musa al-Ashari ﷺ who states:

"While in Yemen, we, the Asharis, had been informed that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had appeared, upon which, together with fifty-two or fifty-three others from our tribe, we set out to immigrate next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. As the weather took a turn for the worse and became unfavorable on the way, our ship dropped us off at land of the Abyssinian Negus. There, along with his friends, we met Jafar ﷺ

509. Ibn Saad, IV, 328.
510. Ibn Saad, I, 353.
511. Ahmad, I, 108; Ibn Saad, IV, 35.
512. The *sama*, or whirling, that begins after reaching an ecstatic state during the Mevlevi *dhikr* takes its inspiration from this very incident.

who said to us, 'The Messenger of Allah sent us to this land and ordered us to remain here for a while. I suggest you also stay with us!'

And later, we eventually boarded a ship and returned all together to Medina. We were united with the Messenger of Allah just as Khaybar had fallen. So the Messenger of Allah gave us a share of the spoils of Khaybar, too." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 38; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 169)

The Jews' Plot to Poison the Blessed Prophet

The Jews had still not given up their treachery despite the humane treatment they were receiving from the Muslims. They plotted, in secret, to murder the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. As vivid as the consequences of their recent crimes still were, they were now attempting to once again betray a Prophet who, instead of sending them to exile like he had done with some other Jewish tribes, had already forgiven them once before for attempting to execute a similar murder plan. Incredibly, they were breaching their pact yet again.

To execute this sinister plot, Zaynab, a daughter of a Jewish notable by the name of Harith, invited the Blessed Prophet, along with some of his Companions, to a feast of roasted lamb, which she thoroughly contaminated with poison from beforehand. Knowing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was especially fond of the shoulder meat of the lamb, she even added extra poison there. But the instant the Prophet of Allah ﷺ took a morsel of the meat, he took it out, and warned his Companions, "The meat tells me it is poisoned… Do not eat from it!" Bishr ibn Bara ؓ had however already taken a piece of the meat, immediately after seeing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ begin to eat and had swallowed the morsel by the time the Prophet ﷺ gave the warning. The others had still not touched the food.

Before too long, the malicious women was caught and brought to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"Was it you that poisoned this lamb?" he asked her.

"How did you find out it had been poisoned?" she asked.

"The shoulder blades in front of me informed me", answered the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

"Yes, it was me who poisoned the lamb", she then said, admitting to her crime.

When asked by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ as to her motive for doing so, she explained, "You killed my father, my uncle and my husband. There is nothing left you have not done to my people. So I thought to myself, 'If he is really a prophet, then my plot will be brought to his awareness by the Almighty and the poison will

do him no harm; but if he is a liar and simply a ruler, he will die from this poison and we will be able to avenge those deaths and rid ourselves from him!'"

"Allah has not given you the power to do that", stated the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

While coming clean with her plot, deeply affected by what she had witnessed, the woman became a Muslim and voicing her remorse, asked to be forgiven. The Prophet ﷺ, sent as a mercy to the worlds, forgave her for her attempted assassination plot. But as Bishr ibn Bara ؓ died a short while later from the poison, his relatives asked for *qisas* or retribution. Harith's daughter was therefore made to consume the same poison.

In order to rid his body of the effects of the poison, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had some blood extracted from between his shoulder blades. (Bukhari, Jizya, 7; Muslim, Salam, 45; Ibn Hisham, III, 390; Waqidi, II, 678-679; Haythami, VI, 153)

Three years later, before breathing his last, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is reported to have diagnosed the effects of this poison as the cause of his passing away. (Hakim, III, 242/4966)

The *Mutah* Issue

Also prohibited around the same time as the Battle of Khaybar was the practice of contracting temporary marriage known as *mutah*, regarding which no prohibition had been revealed until then.

Ali ؓ narrates that "During the Battle of Khaybar, the Messenger of Allah prohibited marrying women under *mutah* and eating the meat of domesticated donkeys." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 38; Nikah, 31; Dhabaih, 28; Hiyal, 3; Muslim, Nikah, 29-32; Muwatta, Nikah, 41; Nasai, Nikah, 71)

Mutah, a practice which has its roots in the Age of Ignorance, is a type of marriage where the woman is hired for a temporary period of time in return for some payment. A *mutah* marriage is terminated once the designated term comes to an end. Right of inheritance, allowance and a waiting period after divorce, common to normal marriages, do not exist in a *mutah* marriage. It was therefore prohibited following Khaybar through numerous *ahadith* in regard. One of those is, "Now Allah, the Glorious, has prohibited it until the Day of Judgment. Whosoever is wed to a woman under *mutah* ought to set her free and not take anything back from what has been given to her as payment!" (Muslim, Nikah, 21; Ibn Majah, Nikah, 44; Darimi, Nikah, 16; Ahmad, III, 406)

On the return from the Tabuk Campaign, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had decided to take a break near Saniyyat'ul-Wada. There, he saw a few women crying and asked them what they were shedding tears over. Someone explained on their behalf

that they were "..women wed under *mutah*." Thereupon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared, "*Mutah* has been annulled by the Islam's rulings on marriage, divorce, the wait (after divorce) and inheritance!" (Ibn Balban, VI, 178; Darakutni, III, 259)

Thus a woman wed under mutah is not a wife, and according to the consensus of Muslim scholars, *mutah* is tantamount to fornication.

Ibn Abbas ﷺ explains the following:

"Before Islam, there was *mutah*. Upon arriving at a foreign place, a person would, under *mutah*, marry a local woman for the duration of the presumed time of his stay there. The woman would thereby keep an eye on his belongings and see to his various chores. This continued up until the Revelation, '…And who guard their private parts. Except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable.' (al-Muminun, 5-6). All other relations, except for the two specified, are thus impermissible." (Tirmidhi, Nikah, 29/1122)

The devastating social consequences of *mutah* include:

a) The damage exacted on children born to such temporary marriages, who, like children born from extra-marital affairs, are made to grow up without fathers, and thus without adequate care and nurturing.

b) As genealogical borders become blurry and offsprings unknown, it is probable that, down the track, a woman might enter a relation with her son, born from a man with whom he had once contracted a *mutah*. The same applies to the man; he might end up being together with his daughter, grand daughter and niece; or simpler said, someone eternally forbidden for him to marry. This is no doubt one of the greatest dangers of *mutah*, as attested to by many like tragedies throughout history.

c) In most cases, it is impossible to distribute the inheritance of someone who has contracted *mutah*, simply because both the numbers and the identities of the persons' inheritors remain unknown.

The dangers that come with *mutah* are indeed menacing. It is the same as laying waste to progeny. A woman, on the other hand, made to contract a *mutah* enters a spiritual downfall as the feeling of being leased is something tremendously demoralizing. *Mutah* is therefore a major blow struck at the core of a woman's virtue. Could a person ever stomach seeing his daughter or mother contract a *mutah* in spite of all its disgust? That would suffice on its own to expose the depravity of *mutah*.[513]

513. For a detailed exposition of the *mutah* issue, see İbrâhim Cânan, *Nâmus Fitnesi Mut'a,* İstanbul, 1993.

The Return from Khaybar

Following the Fall of Khaybar, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent an envoy to the Fadak area, standing at a two days distance away from Medina, and had the area incorporated to the Muslim dominion without a shed of blood.

Lastly, Wadi'il-Qura, a small Jewish settlement located on the road to Medina, was also taken after siege lasting a single day. Like the locals of Khaybar, they too were left to work on their land in return for half their harvest.

As for the Jews of Tayma, they agreed to pay the Blessed Prophet ﷺ *jizyah*, in return for which they were allowed to remain in their settlement. Both of these Jewish tribes had previously made a pact with Khaybar to march on Medina.[514]

The *fath* of Khaybar and the surrounding area paved the Muslim way for the imminent *fath* of Mecca. The defeats of Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir, Banu Qurayza and finally the Jews of Khaybar had intimidated the tribes of the peninsula, leaving not a shadow of a doubt in their minds over the ultimate triumph of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. It was alarming, for the tribes mentioned were the richest and most powerful of all Jews in entire Arabia and their exploits in warfare were legendary. They owned impenetrable forts and an abundant amount of date fields and exercised a power great enough to protect the entire Arabs, should they have chosen to seek refuge in them. But now it had become all too clear how their supposed courage and might withered away when besieged by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and how they were made to humbly accept insufferable burdens. The breeze was now blowing the Believers' way.[515]

In the aftermath of Khaybar, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ married the honorable Safiyya, who was widowed after her husband was slain in the battle.[516] She had married her husband, a notable among the Jews of Khaybar, only a few days prior to the siege of Khaybar. On her wedding night, she saw a dream in which a moon, rising from Medina, came and fell in her lap. She explained her dream to her husband who becoming infuriated, exclaimed, "You want to become the wife of Muhammad, the King of Hijaz, don't you?" before she forcefully slapped Safiyya, leaving her with a black eye, a bruise she was still carrying when she encountered the Blessed Prophet ﷺ a few days later. She explained to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ her ordeal when he inquired how she had gotten the bruise. He, in turn, gave her an explanation of Islam and said, "We are not going to force you if you happen to decide to remain in your religion! If you accept Allah and His Messenger then I shall accept you as

514. See, Ibn Hisham, III, 391; Waqidi, II, 707, 711.
515. See, Waqidi, II, 729-731; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah,* IV, 234.
516. Ibn Saad, VIII, 121-126.

wife. But if you chose to remain a Jew, then I will set you free and you can return to your tribe!"

Safiyya ﵂ chose Islam, becoming 'the mother of Believers'. (Waqidi, II, 674, 707; Ibn Sad, VIII, 123; Ahmad, III, 138)

The Noble Prophet's ﷺ marriage to Safiyya, the daughter of Huyay, engendered closeness with the Jews of Khaybar, and by reducing enmity, enabled the development of friendlier relations. In this respect, Safiyya ﵂ remained close with the Jews, to the point of even drawing complaints, virtually becoming their representative in the Prophet's house.

Once, a female servant of Safiyya ﵂ came to Omar ﵁, during his time as Caliph, and complained of how "…Safiyya was still very much fond of Saturday's and continued his contact with Jews." Caliph Omar ﵁ thereupon sent someone to investigate the situation. Safiyya ﵂ provided an explanation.

"Regarding Saturday", she said, "I do not like that day ever since Allah gave me Friday in its place. And as for your question regarding the Jews, I have relatives among them, whom I see to and visit." (Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, IV, 347)

Safiyya ﵂ then asked her servant why she had made such an accusation. "I followed the *shaytan*", she confessed. Safiyya's ﵂ response to that was of a brilliance that reflected the degree she had embraced the morals of Islam.

"You can go; I have set you free", she said, releasing her female servant who had tried to slander her with a false accusation. (Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, IV, 347)

Umrat'ul-Qada (Dhilqada, 7 / March, 629)

Performed to compensate the attempted *umrah* of a year ago which, thwarted by the idolaters, could not be carried out, this *umrah* has thus come to be known as *umrat'ul-qada*, that is the compensatory umrah.

A year had now passed since Hudaybiyah and the time had come to perform the *umrah* as agreed upon in the Treaty of Hudaybiyah. As they entered the month of Dhilqada in the seventh year of Hegira, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ordered each person present at Hudaybiyah to begin preparing for *umrah*. He extended the command equally to other Muslims. Arabs from neighboring areas who happened to be in Medina at the time stated that they "…neither had food for the trip nor anyone to feed them!"

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ then asked the Muslims of Medina to give charity, for the sake of Allah, glory unto Him, for those in need and see to what needs they may have, cautioning them that pulling their helping hands away from them would mean

their ultimate destruction. The Believers, however, were facing similar problems of their own.

"What can we give as charity, Messenger of Allah, when we are unable to find anything?" they said.

"Whatever you have", replied the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "even if it be half a date…" (Waqidi, II, 731-732)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ eventually set out from Medina along with two-thousand Companions, as well as around a hundred horses and, just in case, military equipment such as helmets, armors and spears. Some Companions reminded the Noble Messenger ﷺ of the condition laid down by Quraysh which prevented them from arming themselves except for the bare minimum considered acceptable for a traveler.

"We are not going to enter the Haram with those weapons; still, better we have them nearby in case of an attack", the Blessed Prophet ﷺ explained. With two-hundred Companions, he then had the weapons sent to Batn-i Yajaj, at a distance of three miles from Mecca. (Waqidi, II, 733-734)

On they way, the pilgrims had a stopover at Abwa. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had been granted permission by Allah, glory unto Him, to visit his mother's grave. During the visit, he mended the grave with his hands and shed a few tears of grief. Finding difficulty in holding back their tears, the Believers also cried. Asked a few moments later as to the reason behind his tears, the Noble Prophet ﷺ said, "…for I remembered my mother's mercy and compassion for me." (Ibn Sad, I, 116-117)

In line with the terms of Hudaybiyah, the idolaters evacuated Mecca for three days and retreated to the nearby mountains, leaving the town at the Muslims' dispense. Stirred from seeing Kaabah for the first time in seven years, the Believers enthusiastically began chanting, at once, the *talbiyah*.

According to the report of Ibn Abbas ﷺ, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was met with and greeted by small children from the Muttalib Clan upon entering Mecca. He subsequently placed one of the children at the front of his saddle and another behind and rode into the town.[517]

In order to show the idolaters there was no truth behind their rumors that the Muslims had fallen weak from the fever of Medina, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ commanded them to walk quickly and with a touch of flamboyance.[518]

"May Allah have mercy on he who makes himself appear brawny to the idolaters!" he prayed. (Ibn Hisham, III, 424-425)

517. Bukhari, Umrah, 13; Libâs, 99.
518. Bukhari, Hajj, 55; Muslim, Hajj, 240; Ahmad, I, 305-306.

The Muslims who had at arrived in Mecca after traveling, under those conditions, a distance of over four-hundred kilometers from Medina, were indeed feeling the strain of the journey; yet they fully lived up to the Prophet's ﷺ command and performed their *umrah* with dignity, exuding a intimidating might. They even ran flamboyantly during the first three *ashwat*, or laps, of the circumambulation, between where the two green poles stand today.

The idolaters, meanwhile, were curiously inspecting the Muslims. Had they been able to observe a glimpse of fatigue and slackness in the Muslims, they could have had other thoughts. Seeing with their own eyes the vivacity and exuberance of the Muslims, they could do little to hide their astonishment:

"Are these the people you say have fallen weak from fever? They are livelier and more animated than us!" they exclaimed. (Muslim, Hajj, 240)

The touching harmony of the *adhan* called out by Bilal Habashi from the roof of Kaabah that day, while stirring Muslim hearts, added to the bewilderment of the onlooking idolaters.

While the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was circumambulating Kaabah with his Companions, Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ began reciting a poem.

"How long will you continue reciting that poem in the presence of the Prophet and in the Haram of Allah?" Omar ﷺ reproached. But the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself intervened.

"Do not prevent him! By Allah in whose Hand of Might my life resides, his words are more damaging for Quraysh than flying arrows! Continue, Ibn Rawaha!" he said, before telling Abdullah to say:

"Say, there is no god and noone to be worshipped other than Allah. He is the One. He is the One who shall realize His promise. He is the One who gives strength to His soldiers. Only He is the One who routs the united tribes!"

The rest of the Companions repeated the words of Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ. (Waqidi, II, 736; Ibn Sad, II, 122-123)

A graceful look of calmness was visible on the Muslims' faces when they eventually returned to Medina after their three-day Kaabah visit. The first Kaabah visit had now taken place and the dream the Blessed Prophet ﷺ saw a year ago was realized in exactitude; a reality to which Allah, glory unto Him, gives mention in the Holy Quran, by alluding to the recent victory at Khaybar and heralding a soon-to-be triumph in Mecca:

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ
اللهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُؤُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ
تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا هُوَ الَّذِى أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ
بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللهِ شَهِيدًا

"Certainly Allah had shown to His Messenger the vision with truth: you shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah pleases, in security, (some) having their heads shaved and (others) having their hair cut, you shall not fear, but He knows what you do not know, so He brought about a near victory before that. He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions; and Allah is enough for a witness." (al-Fath, 27-28)

The *umrat'ul-qada* left a profound impression on the Meccans and its impact soon saw the likes of Khalid ibn Walid, the future captor of Syria, Amr ibn As, the future captor of Egypt and Othman ibn Talha join the ranks of Islam.

As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was departing from Mecca, Umamah ﵂, the daughter of Hamza ﵁, ran after him, pleading to be taken to Medina with him. Ali ﵁ took her by the hand and brought her to his wife Fatimah ﵂, asking her to mind the child. But when they returned to Medina, a minor disagreement arose between Ali, Zayd and Jafar ﵁, who each wanted to be the one to take care of her.

"She is my cousin!" stated Ali ﵁.

"She is my cousin, too, and on top of that I am married to her maternal aunt!" declared Jafar ﵁.

"Well, she is my brother's daughter!" then said Zayd, reminding them of how the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had made he and Hamza ﵁ brothers.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ decided it would be best for Umamah to stay with her maternal aunt, pronouncing, "A maternal aunt is like a mother!" Then turning towards Ali ﵁, the Noble Messenger ﷺ said:

"You are from me, I am from you!"

And to Jafar ﵁, "You look so like me in appearance and conduct", he said.

"You", he then said to Zayd ﵁, "are both our brother and friend!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 43, Umrah, 3; Muslim, Jihad, 90)

Ali ﷺ explains, "Zayd became so elated when he heard the complements of the Messenger of Allah that he began spinning around the Prophet, on one foot. Then Jafar followed Zayd, behind him, in the same manner; and out of joy, I, too, started skipping on one foot behind Jafar." (Ahmad, I, 108; Waqidi, II, 739)

THE EIGHTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

The Passing Away of Zaynab, the Daughter of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ

Zaynab ﵂ never really recovered from the injury she received, when she was pushed off from camelback during her journey to Medina. She ultimately breathed her last on the turn of the eighth year of Hegira. Her corpse was washed by Umm Ayman, an *Ansari* woman Umm Atiyya and the honorable wives of the Prophet ﷺ Sawda and Umm Salama. Just before they began the Noble Prophet ﷺ came next to them and told them to begin washing her, "…from the right hand side and with her limbs of *wudu*! Wash her in odd numbers with water and *sidr*;[519] once, three times, seven times and more, if necessary. Place some camphor in the water before the last run. Inform me when you are done!"

Combing Zaynab's ﵂ hair, they parted it into three and tied it into three locks; one each for the sides and another for the hair on the top of her head. As they finished washing her, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ handed them the shroud he had around his waist and told them to, "Use it as an inner shroud for Zaynab!"[520] (Bukhari, Janaiz, 9, 13, 17; Muslim, Janaiz, 36; Ibn Sad, VIII, 34-36)

After leading her funeral salat, the Noble Messenger ﷺ descended to her grave, downcast and mournfully. He momentarily remained there, before climbing back up, this time with a smile on his face, saying, "Thinking of Zaynab's weakness, I prayed Allah to alleviate from her the troubles and heat of the grave…and Allah accepted my prayer." (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, VII, 131)

The Battle of Muta: A Legend Written by a Handful of Companions (Jamaziyalawwal, 8 / August-September, 629)

Envoys sent by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to various kings and governors, irrespective of the maltreatment and abuse they at times received, in line with the age old principle that forbade 'shooting the messenger', were returning to Medina safe and sound. However, the return of Harith ibn Umayr ﵁, who was sent to the Chieftain of Busra, was never to be. Upon arriving at Mutah, Harith ﵁ was intercepted by

519. A *sidr* is a type of cherry tree found in Arabia, known for its dense and pleasant shade. Its leaves are used to wash the corpse the deceased. (Âsım Efendi, *Kâmus*, II, 385)

520. The shroud that is sunnah for a male consists of three parts: an *izar* to cover the entire body, a shirt and a wrap. For a female, it consists of five parts: an *izar*, a *hijab* over her head, a wrap, a cloth tied around her breasts and abdomen and a shirt.

Shurahbil ibn Amr, a Ghassani chieftain, who asked the Companion where he was headed. Finding out he was the ambassador of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Shurahbil then did the unthinkable and callously murdered and martyred the Companion.[521]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ became deeply upset with the manner in which Harith ؓ was martyred. The crime was furthermore an out-an-out violation of Islam and a complete disregard of Muslims. A counter action was now imperative to save the honor of the Islamic State and to stop the event from leading to drastic consequences. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ therefore immediately mobilized an army of three-thousand Believers.

Based on the universal will of Islam that destroyed the differences of class belonging to the Age of Ignorance, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ designated Zayd ؓ, his free slave, as the commander of the Muslim army. He then gave the commander the following instructions:

"Should you fall martyr, then let Jafar take the command! And should Jafar, too, fall martyr then let Abdullah ibn Rawaha take the command! And if he, too, falls martyr, then let the Muslims choose a commander from among themselves!"

A Jew, in the meantime, overheard these instructions considered them to be death announcements of those mentioned. He approached Zayd ؓ, and with the intention of casting fear into his heart, told him to "Prepare your will! For if Muhammad is really a prophet then you shall not return to him. The names the Prophets of Israel used to give prior to a battle would never return!"

This only made Zayd ؓ happier. (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, IV, 238) The Jew had not the least clue that he, like the rest of the Companions, was burning with the desire for martyrdom.

Abdullah ibn Rawaha ؓ who completed his preparations for the campaign, came and bode farewell to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, whom he would dearly miss, and said, "Advise me with something, Messenger of Allah, that I can commit to my heart!"

"You will soon reach a land where little *sajdah* (prostration) to Allah is made. Increase your salat and *sajdah* there!" recommended the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"Advise me some more, Messenger of Allah", insisted Ibn Rawaha.

"Always remember Allah, for remembrance of Allah will help you attain to what you wish!" (Waqidi, II, 758)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ accompanied the Muslim army as far as Saniyyat'ul-Wada and saw them off on their campaign amid abundant prayers. He commanded

521. Waqidi, II, 755; Ibn Qayyim, III, 381.

them to go as far as the point where Harith ﷺ had been martyred, invite the enemy there to Islam and, if they refuse, fight them, expecting aid only from Allah.[522]

Made aware of the Muslim march, backed by the Byzantines, the grim Shurahbil also prepared a force reportedly of a hundred-thousand in number, bolstered all the more with the enlistment of another hundred-thousand Christian Arabs.[523]

The Muslim army found out about the enormous size of the enemy only after crossing over into Syria. Faced with a situation they had not expected in the least, they held a discussion. As the balance of power was tremendously out of proportion and of an imbalance perhaps never before seen in history, the majority was of the opinion to inform the Blessed Prophet ﷺ of the situation and wait for his instructions. They were moments away from reaching an unanimous decision to send the news to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ when Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ spoke out:

"Isn't that before which we feel hesitant now the very same thing we have set out in search for? Do we ever fight the enemy with a superiority of number or might? No! We fight with the power of religion Allah has granted us. So what are we waiting for? What awaits us is one of two beautiful ends: Either martyrdom or victory!"

The Companions thus settled on firmly marching ahead.

Zayd ibn Arqam ﷺ recounts:

"I was an orphan in the care of Abdullah ibn Rawaha. When setting out on the Mutah Campaign, he had me seated on the back of his saddle. After traveling some time in the night, I heard him murmur to himself a poem along the lines of, 'O my camel! Just take me and my load across four stations, ahead of the well near the sands, and I will never ride you to any other campaign. You shall thereafter be free, without an owner! To my family, it looks as if I will not be able to return! To be martyred is what I hope! Muslims have come and left me in the lands of Damascus, wherein I am eager to forever be! No longer do I care for the ripe date trees, watered by rainfall and from beneath!'

After hearing him, I began to cry. Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ then gently poked me with his whip and said, 'What harm could there be, kid, for Allah to grant me martyrdom and for you to return on camelback with your load? I will then be relieved from all the troubles and grief of the world!'

Deep in the night, he got off from his camel and offered two *rakahs* of salat. Afterwards, he said a lengthy prayer, after which he commented, 'This time, Allah willing, I will be granted martyrdom!'" (Ibn Hisham, III, 431-432; Waqidi, II, 759)

522. Ibn Saad, II, 128.
523. Ibn Hisham, III, 429.

Once they reached the outskirts of the village of Mutah where the enemy had been stationed, without the blink of an eye, the handful of Believers led by Zayd ﷺ launched a courageous onslaught on the enemy ranks. Those who had given their hearts to *tawhid* were now on the verge of giving their lives in Allah's way. In a heated and violent moment of the Battle, Zayd ﷺ, the beloved of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and among the first eight Muslims in Mecca, came on the receiving end of fatal enemy spears and was martyred.

Compliant with the instructions given by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Jafar ﷺ immediately seized the Muslim flag and assumed leadership of the army. He gallantly forced his way through the enemy ranks and in a legendary bout in which he was meted out with numerous strikes of the sword, ended up losing both of his arms and was martyred a short while later.

Time had now come for Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ to assume leadership of the forces. With like zeal, he grabbed the Muslim flag and waved in amid the streaming enemy ranks.

"Bear witness", he declared to those around, "that I am leaving all of what I have in Medina to the Treasury!"

He then put up a heroic fight until his body could bear no more of the sword and spear wounds. Following the martyrdom of Abdullah ibn Rawaha ﷺ, it was Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ to take the Muslim flag and continue leading the Believers' epic onslaught. A handful of Companions were putting up a colossal resistance against an enemy as numerous as a swarm of grasshoppers.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was meanwhile reporting the Battle, moment by moment, to his Companions from the pulpit of the Masjid in Medina. It was as if the battlefield was right in front of their eyes. The Prophet ﷺ was depicting the martyrings taking place one after another at Mutah, in a sorrowful tone:

"Zayd ibn Harithah has taken the flag. Shaytan has quickly come next to him to make life and the world look dear to him and death, ugly and despicable. But Zayd says, 'You are trying to endear the world to me at a moment that ought to reinforce the *iman* in Muslim hearts!' He has advanced and has been martyred. Pray Allah for his forgiveness and mercy!"

The Noble Prophet ﷺ then continued:

"He is now running around in Paradise. Jafar has now taken the flag. Shaytan has quickly come next to him, wanting to make life and the world look dear to him and death ugly and despicable. But Jafar responds, 'Now is the time that ought to

reinforce *iman* in Muslim hearts!' and advances, where he fights and until being martyred. I testify that he was martyred."[524]

"Ask forgiveness and mercy from Allah on your brother's behalf", he then added. "He has now entered Paradise as a martyr, flying to wherever his heart pleases with two wings of ruby."

"Abdullah ibn Rawaha has grabbed the flag after Jafar", explained the Blessed Prophet ﷺ before falling into an abrupt silence. The *Ansari* faces grew pale, thinking Ibn Rawaha had done something the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not pleased with. In the meantime, in the field of Mutah, while steering his horse towards the enemy, Abdullah ibn Rawaha ؓ was at the same time battling to bring his own *self* to its knees:

"I have sworn to crush you into submission" he was calling out to his *self*. "You either comply of your own accord or I will force you into compliance! I see that you do not like Paradise all that much! But what are you apart from a drop of water in the bottle that is the body? O self! Will you be able to evade death if you survive today? If you chose to follow the two before you and opt for martyrdom, you will have made a right move! But if you are late, you will live to lament!"

Receiving a nasty wound on his finger, which was hanging by a thread to his hand, Ibn Rawahah dismounted from his horce, and placing his wounded finger under his foot, said:

"What are you but a mere finger bleeding in the path of the Almighty?" he said in a poetic tone, before swiftly pulling his hand from under his foot, removing his dangling finger. He then continued to fight. Engaging in a minor *jihad* against the enemy, he was at the same time caught up in a major *jihad* against his own self:

"If your worry stems from being separated from your wife, then know that I hereby divorce her! If being deprived of the aid of your slaves is what holds you back, then know that I have set them free! Or if your garden is what you cannot leave behind then take note that I hereby leave them to the disposal of Allah and His Messenger!"

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ continued keeping the Companions updated with scenes from the Battle:

524. Ibn Omar ؓ states, "We searched for Jafar and found him among the martyrs. We counted around ninety sword and arrow wounds on the front part of his body. None of these wounds were on his back." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 44) Jafar ؓ was thirty-three when he was martyred. (Ibn Hisham, III, 434) That means he was merely a seventeen year old teenager when he migrated to Abyssinia and addressed the Negus with such marvelous knowledge, wisdom and courage.

"Abdullah ibn Rawahah has gathered his courage, has fought the enemy with the flag in his hand and is now martyred. He has entered Paradise with a misgiving. Ask forgiveness and mercy from Allah on your his behalf, too!"

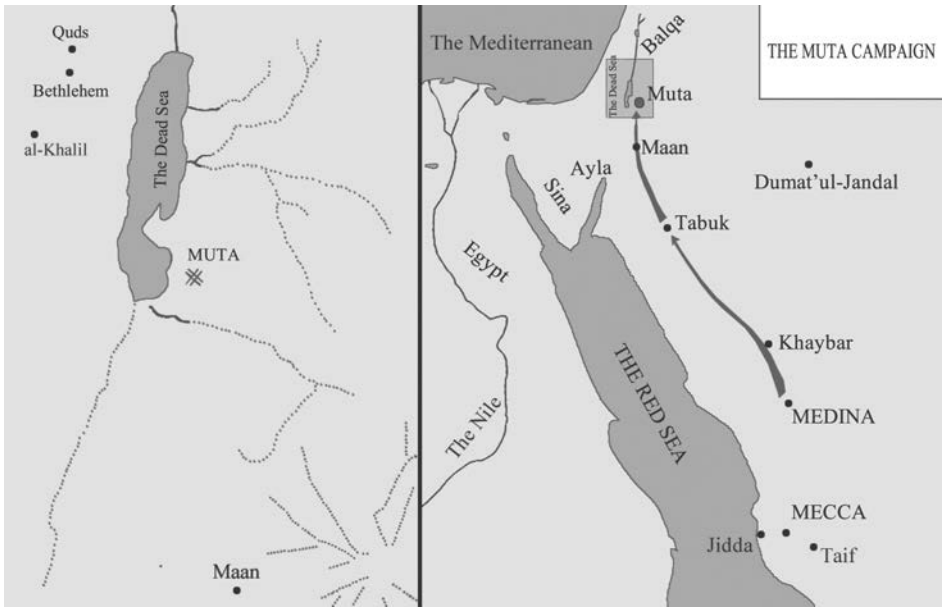
"What was his misgiving, Messenger of Allah?" asked the *Ansar*, who took it to heart the manner in which Abdullah had entered Paradise.

"He hesitated to fight the enemy after he became wounded. He then condemned himself, gathered his courage and was martyred! He entered Paradise. They have been shown to me, in Paradise, seated on golden thrones. Abdullah's throne was below those of his friends and crooked. When I asked the reason, I was told, 'Abdullah had carried some doubts with him prior to fighting!'"

That Abdullah was martyred and was now a dweller of Paradise gave the *Ansar* a reason for joy.

Still reporting from the battlefield, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ grew in sorrow and pearl like tears began to drop, one after another, from his eyes. He then said, "The flag has now been taken by a sword from among the swords of Allah…and Allah has as a result granted victory to the *mujahidun*." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 44; Ahmad, V, 299; III, 113; Ibn Hisham, III, 433-436; Waqidi, II, 762; Ibn Saad, III, 46, 530; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, III, 237)

Then with teary eyes, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ raised his hands aloft to the gates of Divine Mercy, and prayed, "Allah…Khalid is a sword from among your swords. Grant him your aid!" (Ahmad, V, 299)



Khalid ibn Walid's Prowess as Commander

Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ managed the war with exceptional skill until sunset when both forces retreated into their camps with the setting dark. In the dark of night, he then completely changed the setup of the Muslim army. He switched the right and left flanks around, placed the soldiers of the forefront at the back, and moved those at the back to the very front line. Come morning, the enemy was dumbfounded; seeing completely fresh faces in front of them, they hesitated, thinking the Muslim army had received reinforcement overnight. Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ, the sword of Allah, was sure to pounce on this opportunity of having an undecided enemy in front of him. He launched a massive onslaught and the enemy, not expecting such a forceful offensive, could not endure long against the avalanche of *iman* that showed ominous signs of sweeping them away. They began showing signs of disarray and, as a safety measure, were ultimately forced to retreat.

Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ, who had nine swords broken in his hand that day,[525] made the most of that opportunity, too, and, without making it obvious to the enemy, commanded the retreat of the Muslim forces. A second testimony of his military genius, this maneuver meant that both forces had withdrawn without being able to claim victory. Khalid ﷺ managed to bring the Muslim army home to Medina without many casualties. The number of martyrs in a battle that spanned across seven days was only fourteen. Enemy casualties, on the other hand, were more. The Muslim army had even managed to bring some spoils with them. (Waqidi, II, 764, 768; Ibn Saad, III, 407)

The Blessed Prophet ordered the Believers in Medina '…to gather and welcome their homecoming brothers', upon which the entire Muslims of Medina, joined by the Noble Prophet ﷺ riding his mount, braved the heat and gathered to meet the *mujahidun*. There was a crowd of children following the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Seeing them, he commanded the Believers to take the children on the front of their saddles and give Jafar's son Abdullah to him. Abdullah rode on the mount of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in front of him on the saddle. (Ahmad, V, 299; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, IV, 244)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ praised Khalid's success; and to those in Medina who, for having no insight into the matter were accusing the returning soldiers with taking flight from the battlefield, he stated:

"They are not of those who flee from fighting in the way of Allah…rather they are those who retreat and attack, again and again!' (Ibn Hisham, III, 438; Waqidi, II, 765)

Indeed, the Battle of Muta saw a small unit intimidate a major force of tremendous size, as if to actualize the truth revealed by the Almighty:

525. Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ avows, "By Allah, nine swords broke in my hand on the Day of Muta. Only a Yemen made, wide-edged sword endured." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 44)

كَمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَاللهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah's permission, and Allah is with the patient." (al-Baqara, 249)

The Battle of Muta, where three-thousand Believers managed to avert a two-hundred-thousand manned force, marks first heated conflict with Christians, the People of the Book.

Asma bint Umays, the wife of Jafar ﷺ, recounts:

"The Messenger of Allah came to us when Jafar and his friends were martyred. That day, I had tanned forty pieces of pelt. After having prepared my bread dough, I washed the faces of my children, combed and oiled their hairs.

'Where are your children, Asma?' asked the Messenger of Allah. When I called them, the Messenger of Allah affectionately hugged and kissed them, embracing them all. In the meanwhile he had begun to shed tears.

'May my parents be sacrificed for you, Messenger of Allah; why are you crying? Why are you treating my children the way you treat orphans? Or is it that you received bad news from Jafar and his friends?' I asked him.

'Yes', replied he. 'They were martyred today…'

'Oh my…my Jafar', I exclaimed and begun to wail.

The Messenger of Allah then told his daughter Fatimah to prepare food for '… Jafar's family, for they are preoccupied with what has befallen them today!'

Food was brought to our house for three days; three days throughout which the Messenger of Allah did not visit us to give us sometime on our own. He then came and said to us, 'Cry over my brother no more! From today onwards, I will look after his children!'"

Abdullah, Jafar's ﷺ son, says:

"The Messenger of Allah gently took us to his home, like we were baby birds, and then sent for a barber. The barber came and gave us a haircut. The Messenger of Allah then lifted his hands and prayed, 'O my Lord! Be a successor to Jafar's family with goodness! Grant Abdullah's hand prosperity in trade!' He repeated the prayer three times.

I explained this to my mother when she came. She was overly happy. The Messenger of Allah said to her, 'Do not worry about the livelihood of these children! I

am their benefactor both Here and in the Hereafter!' (Ahmad, I, 204-205; Abu Dawud, Tarajjul, 13/4192; Ibn Hisham, III, 436; Waqidi, II, 766; Ibn Saad, IV, 37)

Abdullah ibn Jafar ﷺ pleasantly reminisces how affectionate the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was towards them:

"I remember well. As Qusam, Ubaydullah, who are the sons of Abbas ﷺ, and I were playing in the street one day, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned up next to us on a mount.

'Lift him to me', he said to those around, pointing at me.

'And him, too', he then said in a similar tone, this time pointing at Qusam.

Even though Abbas ﷺ, the Prophet's ﷺ uncle, had a greater fondness towards Ubaydullah than Qusam, the Messenger of Allah felt no qualm in taking Qusam onto his saddle. He then caressed Qusam's head three times, praying each time:

'O my Lord! Take care of Jafar's children!'"[526] (Ahmad, I, 205; Hakim, III, 655/6411)

The *Fath* of Mecca: The Truth Has Arrived and Falsehood Perished

The period of peace, according to the Treaty of Hudaybiyah signed between the Muslims of Medina and the idolaters of Mecca, was to last ten years. Feelings of unease were creeping more and more into the idolaters, however, with each passing day, seeing Islam take the entire Arabia in its hold. They hence began feeling an urgent need for violating the terms of the Treaty, and as time passed, they began to show nerve and give an open signal that they would not abide by the terms for much longer. Only seventeen or eighteen months had passed since the Treaty when the Meccans provoked the Banu Bakr tribe, their allies, to attack Huzaa, who were Muslims and therefore untouchable by the terms of the Treaty. Reportedly, some Qurayshis also took active part in this callous attack.[527]

Huzaa, who had pledged allegiance to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, were offering their salats when the attack took place; some were in *sajdah*, some in *ruqu*, while others in *qiyam*, as the brutal massacre staked a claim to their lives. Some managed to make it to the Haram territory, the inviolable sanctuary where they hoped to save their lives. But enraged, Banu Bakr and the few men of Quraysh carried on their massacre ruthlessly. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ soon found out about the incident.[528]

526. One of the narrators of the *hadith* says, "I asked Abdullah ibn Jafar 'What happened to Qusam later?' 'He was martyred', he said. I thereupon said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best'. 'Indeed', replied he." (Hakim, III, 655/6411)
527. Ibn Hisham, IV, 4; Beyhakî, *Delâil*, V, 6.
528. Ibn Hisham, IV, 11; Waqidi, II, 783.

Tears were flowing freely from the Noble Prophet's ﷺ eyes while listening to Amr ibn Salim ﷺ deliver the news of the heartrending tragedy. He was deeply upset. As words of comfort for Amr ibn Salim, he said, "You shall be helped, Amr!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 12; Waqidi, II, 784-785)

In spite of everything that had taken place, bearing in mind they were still under a Treaty with the idolaters, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent an ambassador to Mecca regarding the raid on Huzaa. Accordingly, Quraysh would either have to pay the blood money of the martyred victims of Huzaa or expel Banu Bakr from their protection. Failure to comply with any one of these options would, they were to be aware, altogether nullify the Treaty of Hudaybiyah.

The idolaters, blinded by hatred and desire for blood, agreed on the last option: to call an end to the Treaty.[529] Little were they aware that they were virtually extending an invitation to the Muslims for the *fath* of Mecca.

Although the idolaters came to their senses a short time later, it was all too little too late, as the Treaty had officially been cancelled by both sides. In hope of rectifying the situation, the desperate and remorseful Abu Sufyan set out for Medina. Through Divine inspiration, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ informed his Companions, at the instant, that Abu Sufyan had departed from Mecca to renew the peace.[530] The Believers in Medina, still tense from the recent massacre of Huzaa, had better ideas than to indulge Abu Sufyan upon his arrival; such that even his own daughter Umm Habibah, among the honorable wives of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, pulled a cushion away from him just as he wanted to sit, much to his astonishment.

"Is it that I am unworthy of the cushion or is the cushion unworthy of me?" he asked his daughter.

The honorable Umm Habibah, who had perished in the love of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, replied, "That cushion belongs to the Messenger of Allah; and you, as an unclean idolater, are never worthy of sitting on it!"

Abu Sufyan was petrified. "You have become something else since you left us", he stammered.

"No", she responded. "Only Allah has honored me with Islam!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 12-13)

The stance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the entire Companions meant that Abu Sufyan had no other choice than to return to Mecca empty-handed. When trying to explain the fact that peace was no longer possible to the anxious idolaters

529. Waqidi, II, 787.
530. Ibn Hisham, IV, 12.

gathered around him wishing to know the outcome of his visit, Abu Sufyan could do little to hide his astonishment:

"I am returning", he said, "from a people, whose hearts are one. Believe me when I tell you that I spoke to men and women, young and old, and everyone who I thought might be of help…but to no avail!" (Abdurrazzaq, V, 375)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the meanwhile ordered the Believers to prepare for a campaign on Mecca. He summoned the nearby Muslim tribes to Medina while telling the distant tribes to remain in their places and join the Muslim army on the way. The intense preparation was conducted in utmost secret. To stop the Meccans from becoming suspicious, the Noble Messenger ﷺ even sent a small unit towards Syria. All sides were under tight control. With the help of Allah, glory unto Him, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was adamant in his wish to take Mecca without shedding a drop of blood, for which he took numerous strategic measures:

Firstly, even though the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ordered the Companions to prepare for a campaign, he did not specify the destination, keeping a closed lid on his intention.[531] Even Abu Bakr ؓ, his closest friend and confidant, did not realize the campaign was to be on Mecca and asked Aisha ؓ, his daughter and wife of the Prophet ﷺ, of the intended destination. Yet, she knew nothing more than her father.

"I do not know", she said. "He is perhaps intending on Banu Sulaym or Thaqif or may be even Hawazin!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 14)

To ensure the *fath* of Mecca was carried out peacefully, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had all the incoming roads to Medina under surveillance, lest the idolaters would find out about the preparations, and becoming suspicious, would begin preparations of their own. Likewise, he took measures against spies carrying news of the preparation to Mecca and prayed:

"O my Lord! Arrest the spies of Quraysh, make then blind and deaf, until we suddenly descend on their land! Blind their eyes so that they suddenly see me in front of them!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 14)

When the Muslim army eventually departed from Medina, again, to confuse the idolaters, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ lead them to the opposite direction, where they stopped over by their allies. Trekking a circular path only placed greater uncertainty on the Prophet's ﷺ intended destination. Once they got within a visible distance of Mecca, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had each Muslim soldier light up a separate flame in order to give the impression they were more in number than what Quraysh thought.[532] In similar fashion, the Muslim army did not enter through Dhulhulayfa,

531. Ibn Saad, II, 134.
532. Hamîdullâh, I, 264-265.

the *miqat* spot lying on the way to Mecca, by which the Prophet of Allah ﷺ continued keeping the destination of the journey a secret.[533]

Once the Blessed Prophet ﷺ seized power, he did not abuse it by massacring human beings and conquering their lands by force. He much rather used it to open their hearts to the Almighty and steer them to true happiness and guidance. He was after all the Prophet of Compassion sent as a mercy and guidance to the worlds.

Allah, glory unto Him, elaborates the Muslim notion of war and peace in the following *ayah*:

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِى الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

"They are those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong. With Allah rests the end and decision of all affairs." (al-Hajj, 41)

While all the Companions kept the destination of the Campaign a secret upon finding out, Khatib ibn Baltaa, a veteran of Badr, sent a letter to Mecca, with a certain woman, informing them of the situation. The Noble Prophet ﷺ was made aware of the incident through Divine inspiration and commanded Ali, Zubayr and Miqdad ﷺ to seize and bring the woman to him, telling them her exact whereabouts. She was caught at the precise location the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said she was. The letter read:

"Quraysh…! The Messenger of Allah is coming to you with such a tremendous force, an army, as terrifying as the dark of night that will flow like the flood. By Allah, even if the Messenger of Allah was to come to you on his own, Allah will surely make him victorious and fulfill His promise. Take care of yourselves, from now!" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, IV, 278)

In truth, these words were neither contrary to the facts, nor did they suggest a betrayal. But it still meant that a move that was supposed to remain hidden was being disclosed to the enemy. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ therefore immediately called Khatib next to him and asked:

"Why did you do this Khatib?" Khatib explained, remorsefully, "All the *Muhajirun*, Messenger of Allah, have someone to take care of their families and properties in Mecca. But I have nobody. By writing them a letter, I thought I could gain their appreciation and thereby protect my wife and children there. Otherwise and by Allah, I am not a spy working for them. I could never accept *kufr* after Islam.

533. Nebî Bozkurt, *DİA,* "Mekke" entry. XXVIII, 557.

By Allah, my *iman* to Allah and His Messenger is boundless. I have not changed religions…no way!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, an ocean of compassion, thereupon said, "Khatib has defended himself rightly", before declaring him forgiven. He then reminded Omar ﷺ, who wished to execute Khatib for betrayal, of the general amnesty given by the Almighty to the participants of the Battle of Badr, stating, "But he was present at the Battle of Badr. You never know; it just might be that Allah the Almighty, aware of their situation, has declared, 'Do as you wish; I have forgiven you!'" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 9; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 161)

With that said, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ communicated the harm of befriending the enemies of Allah, to the entire Companions, first and foremost Khatib, through the following *ayah* revealed in the meantime:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِّنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the Messenger and yourselves because you believe in Allah, your Lord? If you go forth struggling hard in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love to them? And I know what you conceal and what you manifest; and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight path.

إِنْ يَثْقَفُوكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ. لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

If they find you, they will be your enemies, and will stretch forth towards you their hands and their tongues with evil, and they ardently desire that you may disbelieve. Your relationship would not profit you, nor your children on the day of res-

urrection; He will decide between you; and Allah sees what you do." (al-Mumtahinah, 1-3)[534]

These *ayat* prohibited Muslims from befriending nonbelievers from family or property related fears. In fact, Nuh's عليه السلام son Kenan perished for remaining amongst the nonbelievers, just like Lut's عليه السلام wife called wickedness onto herself for siding with the wicked and was beset with Divine wrath. In the end, their physical closeness to a prophet did not benefit them in the least.

In the eighth year of Hegira, on the tenth of Ramadan, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ lead his magnificent army of ten-thousand Believers strong out of Medina. Being on a campaign in the way of Allah, he broke his fast on the way and commanded the Believers do the same.[535]

Near Juhfah, they met Abbas رضي الله عنه, who until then, had been keeping his acceptance of Islam hidden from Quraysh and remaining in Mecca, had been providing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in Medina with continuous updates of the situation on Mecca. Another reason as to why he remained in Mecca was the chore of supplying water for the pilgrims, a task that had been entrusted with him. Thinking time had finally come, he had departed from Mecca with his family to accomplish his long awaited Hegira.[536] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was extremely happy to see him.

"Just like I am the last of the prophets, you are the last of the *Muhajirun*", he said. (Ali al-Muttaqi, XI, 699/33387)

The spectacular journey enroute to the *fath* of Mecca also stood witness to a glorious scene of compassion, a blueprint for entire humankind to follow. It was a sheer expression of seeing the created through the eye of the Creator. The Noble Prophet's ﷺ army was marching forth like a surging flood. Tribes streaming from all the four corners of Arabia were joining the Muslim army in masses, adding to the size of a crowd rarely seen before. As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was leading the charge of his splendid army from Arj to Talub, he noticed a dog, stretched out over her pups, breastfeeding them. He quickly called Juayl ibn Suraqa and commanded him to stand guard over the dog and her pups, instructing him to keep an eye on the dog and her pups and make sure nobody did the slightest thing would frighten them.[537]

What an incredible scene! One cannot help but wonder whether the history of humankind has ever witnessed a like scene of compassion?[538]

534. Bukhari, Tafsir, 60.
535. Bukhari, Maghazi, 47.
536. Ibn Hisham, IV, 18.
537. Waqidi, II, 804.
538. Still, adversaries of Islam give joint mention to it with terror, a contemporary tragedy of humanity. Terror and anarchy are built upon heartlessness, without the least qualm for morality. Ever since its birth, Islam, on the other hand, has taken a stance against terror and anarchy and has made it a

Even when on the verge of a historically groundbreaking event like the *fath* of Mecca, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ busied himself with what many would consider to be detail and regarded himself responsible for the wellbeing of a dog and her pups. A lesson to be drawn from this concerns those who are in executive positions; they need to conduct themselves with a consciousness of responsibility in fulfilling every minute detail of their duties and be ready for whatever unexpected might crop up in relation.[539]

The Meccans, in the meanwhile, had no idea of what was going on. They thus became tongue-tied when they heard that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had an army encamped at the Valley of Marr'uz-Zahran in nearby Mecca, all the more when they eventually stood witness to the spectacular view provided by the separate fires lit by each Muslim unit with the order of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Their minds were boggled.

Taking Hakim ibn Hizan and Budayl with him, Abu Sufyan left Mecca to see what exactly was going on. Before too long the three encountered a barrage of separate flames lit by the Muslim soldiers. They at first tried guessing who the encamped soldiers might be, not having the slightest clue that they were actually in fact the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. As Mecca was virtually surrounded on all sides, Abu Sufyan and his two friends were arrested soon afterwards and brought to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.[540]

While Omar ؓ was urging the Blessed Prophet ﷺ for the execution of Abu Sufyan, Abbas ؓ, the Prophet's ﷺ uncle, was insisting he be forgiven. But instead

priority to uphold the rights of all beings, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, even of non-living entities. The twenty-three year prophethood of the Noble Messenger ﷺ has virtually been a struggle against terror.

539. Poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy gives elegant voice to Omar's ؓ legendary sense of administrative respo - sibility:

If a wolf was to snatch a sheep by the Tigris,
It would be Omar called to account by Divine Justice,
An old woman left alone …Omar is to blame!
Her orphans swept away by woe…Omar is to blame!
A nest of poverty neglected to crumble,
It is Omar again, nobody else, left under its rubble
When, with betrayal, one sheds a drop of blood,
That one drop rises to drown Omar in its flood,
Omar is heard from every break of heart,
From every mourning, it is Omar driven out,
When Omar is Caliph, who else is there to blame?
What can Omar do, o Lord, when man is tyrant and lame,
Demanded from Omar is what from Muhammad was expected,
Omar, Omar…how was this load, on your shoulders, rested?

540. Bukhari, Maghazi, 48.

the Noble Messenger ﷺ, employing his matchless political genius in a psychological tactic, told his uncle Abbas to, "Take Abu Sufyan to where he can see the army of Islam march past and let him gaze at its splendor!"

This move was to ensure the leader of Quraysh became engrossed in a state of mind that would convince him that any preparation undertaken against the Muslims, after this point in time, would be useless. A lack of interest by the idolaters in showing resistance would thereby almost certainly prevent bloodshed.

Compliant with the Prophet's ﷺ advice, Abbas ؓ took Abu Sufyan where he could freely see the Muslim army with his own two eyes. The army had just begun moving and was advancing forth in units. Echoes of *Allah'u Akbar* bursting forth from hearts of *iman* had the skies trembling.

Abu Sufyan was dazzled. Just when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was marching past at the front of his unit, he could not help but give vent to his amazement, exclaiming, "How great a kingdom your nephew has built for himself, Abbas!"

"This is not kingdom", replied Abbas, "it is prophethood!"

"True, true…" was all Abu Sufyan could say. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 48; Haythami, VI, 164; Ibn Saad, II, 135; Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, II, 242)

The two then returned next to the Noble Messenger ﷺ, who looked at Abu Sufyan and asked, "Has not the time come yet for you to say *La ilaha ill-Allah*?"

After thinking for a moment, Abu Sufyan repeated the words of *tawhid*, without, however, adding the part which confirms acceptance of the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. So he asked again:

"Has not the time come for you to say I am the Messenger of Allah?"[541]

Although Abu Sufyan asked for some time to think, with the pressure of Abbas ؓ, he said the words of *shahadah* in full. To win his heart over completely and warm it to Islam, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon referred to Abu Sufyan's home

541. Clearly understood from the declaration of Allah, glory unto Him, in the Quran:

قُلْ اَطِيعُوا اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger; but if they turn back, then surely Allah does not love the nonbelievers" (Al-i Imran, 32) is the fact that *iman* in the Almighty and obeying Him alone are not enough. Those who have *iman* in and obey only Allah excluding His Messenger, or vice-versa for that matter, are classified by the *ayah* as unbelievers whom Allah, glory unto Him, dislikes. The important thing is for one to regulate his *iman* in accordance with the Divine Will and Command, not with his inadequate understanding.

In that respect, when the Almighty has granted His Messenger this status and has specified recognizing and obeying His Messenger as a fundamental pillar of faith, how ignorant and even treacherous must it be to claim, like many ignorant do today, the Holy Quran to be sufficient, and on such a pretext based on their shallow understanding, to reject the Sunnah of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

as among the safe havens, for the locals of Mecca, once the Muslim army stepped foot in the town:

"Whoever enters *Masjid'ul-Haram* shall be safe. Whoever remains home shall be safe. And whoever seeks refuge in Abu Sufyan's house shall be safe!" (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 24-25/3021-3022; Haythami, VI, 164-166; Ibn Hisham, IV, 22)

Just as Abu Sufyan was returning to Mecca after being released, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave his final order:

"Do not draw your swords unless you come under attack!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 28)

Shortly after, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ commanded the Muslim army, which he had already divided to four corps, to advance. Mecca thereafter began quivering with the sounds of *Allah'u Akbar* echoing from all four sides.

Eight years after being forced to leave Mecca, in low spirits, in the company of merely two people and a couple of camels, the grace of Allah, glory unto Him, was now seeing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ return to the sacred turf accompanied by a magnificent army of ten-thousand Muslims. A wrongfully persecuted man of then was today triumphant in his home land. But never letting pride take sway, he was entering Mecca prostrating on camelback, immersed in thanking the Almighty, who had granted him this enormous blessing. So much had he lowered his head in humbleness that his beard was touching his saddle. Meanwhile, he was constantly saying, "Allah…Life is only the life of the Hereafter!"[542] (Waqidi, II, 824; Bukhari, Riqaq, 1) No different was the mood of the Companions, trained under prophetic morals.

The Muslim army encountered almost no resistance. The tactics applied on Abu Sufyan had worked; upon his return to Mecca, he persuaded Quraysh that there was no point in putting up resistance and as a result nobody dared putting up a fight. There was a minor conflict only at the passage where Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ entered the town but that was quickly taken under control.

Reciting *surah* al-Fath, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ approached Kaabah with his Companions. Without dismounting from his camel, he circumambulated the Sacred House, and reciting the *ayah*:

جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ

542. During his lifetime, the Blessed Prophet ﷺis known to have frequently repeated this prayer, which draws attention to the weight of the Hereafter compared to the life of the world. Narrated among the occasions in which he made this prayer are during the construction of *Masjid'un-Nabawi*, during the digging of the trenches prior to Handak, when entering Mecca on the Day of *Fath* and during the farewell pilgrimage upon seeing the enormous number of Believers in front of him. (See, Bukhari, Jihad 33, 110, Manaqib'ul-Ansar 9, Maghazi 29; Muslim, Jihad, 126, 129; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 55; Ibn Majah, Masajid, 3)

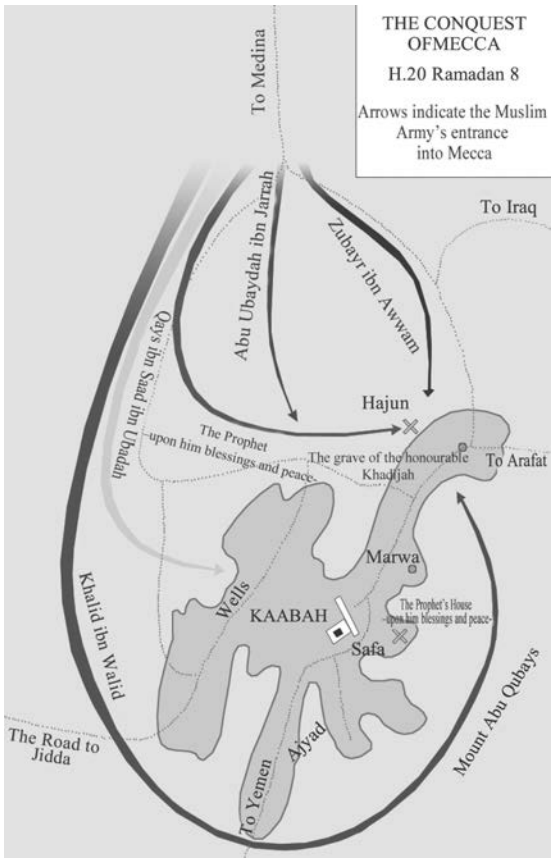
"The Truth has arrived and falsehood perished…" (al-Isra, 81), he personally began tipping over and destroying the idols stationed in Kaabah, with the stick in his hand. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 48; Muslim, Jihad, 87; Waqidi, II, 831-832)

Seeing images on the inner walls of Kaabah, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not initially enter and commanded them to be wiped out. The Companions executed the order at the instant. Inside, there were images of Ibrahim and Ismail عليهما السلام tune arrows in their hands. Upon seeing them, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stated:

"May Allah perish the idolaters who drew these…By Allah, these prophets never sought their fortune with arrows!" (Bukhari, Anbiya, 8; Hajj, 54, Maghazi, 48)

Mawlana Rumi -Allah have mercy on him- explains the degree of gratitude we ought to have for the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who for a life time endured the most unthinkable of hardships to shatter idols and overthrow oppression:

"You, who today enjoys being a Muslim; know that had it not been for the supreme effort of Our One and Only Ahmad, and his resolve in smashing the idols, you too would have been an idolater like your forefathers."



The day the Believers took over Mecca, they continuously circumambulated Kaabah until morning amid chants of *Allah-u Akbar*. Watching them from a distance, Abu Sufyan murmured to his wife Hind, "Do you believe this is from Allah?"

"Yes", replied Hind. "This could only be the work of Allah!"

In the early hours of the following morning, Abu Sufyan visited the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who recounted to Abu Sufyan the conversation that took place between him and Hind. Abu Sufyan then said:

"I bear witness you are the Messenger of Allah! By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my life

resides, nobody heard what I said except for Allah and Hind!" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, IV, 296)

The Meccans, in the meantime, were taking their children to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, who caressing them, was praying for their wellbeing. (Ahmad, IV, 32)

The Festival of Forgiveness

The Meccans had crammed inside the *Masjid'ul-Haram*, nervously awaiting their verdict. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave a short speech, applicable not only to Quraysh but also to the entire humankind:

"There is no god but Allah. There is only He. He has no resemblance, no partner. Allah has fulfilled His promise, helped his servant and dispersed all our enemies. Except for Kaabah's service and providing the pilgrims with water, all customs and practices of old, feuds of blood and property, today lie under my feet.

Quraysh…!

Allah has rid you of the pride of Ignorance, of boasting with fathers and lineage. All humans are created through Adam and Adam from soil."

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ then read out the below *ayah*:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." (al-Hujurat, 13)" (Ibn Majah, Diyat, 5; Ahmad, II, 11; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 49/3270)

By virtue of a spiritual *fath* entwined with forgiveness, peace, security and guidance, as promised at Hudaybiyah, Mecca had now opened its heart to her true dwellers, her beloved community. The pain and agony ridden separation from Mecca was now over. Years of grief had now made way for joy. As an expression of gratitude for this tremendous turnaround, moments before declaring the greatest amnesty in history, the Blessed Prophet asked Quraysh:

"What do you suppose I will do with you, Quraysh?"

"We expect you to do what is good and favorable …so we will say you will only do what is good. You are a generous and noble brother and nephew!"

The Noble Messenger ﷺ thus replied, "Just as Yusuf said to his brothers, so shall I say:

لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

'There shall be no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful.' You are all free to leave!"

And in another instance, he said, "Today is the day of mercy. Today is the day in which Allah shall strengthen and elevate Quraysh with Islam."

Consequently, even those who had the blood of many Muslims on their hands prior to the *fath* accepted Islam. Allah, glory unto Him, had placed Quraysh in the mercy of His Messenger and made them succumb to him. In turn, the Noble Messenger ﷺ had forgiven them and allowed their release. The Meccans were thereafter also known as *tulaqa*, that is to say, those who were set free.[543]

The Prophet's ﷺ greatest desire was for entire humankind to accept Islam, exclusively, without a single person left out. At a time when he was at the peak of his power, despite it being well within his right to take revenge from people who had subjected him and his fellow Companions to the most awful treatment, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ declared an official amnesty, an extraordinary manifestation of his viewing of the created with the merciful sight of the Creator.

Mecca, having witnessed nothing but oppression, mockery and enmity for years on end, was now making the most of the sweet breeze of compassion and mercy, ensured by the great forgiveness gusting throughout. But a Meccan by the name of Fadala, with the intention of casting a grim shadow over this pleasant day, approached the Blessed Prophet ﷺ with the intention of killing him. Yet, possessing insight to his malicious intention all along, without showing any sign of panic or anger, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ spread his wings of mercy for Fadala and, placing his graceful hands on Fadala's chest, said:

"Repent, Fadala, from the plot you have contrived in your mind!" The malicious intention disappeared from Fadala's mind there and then; his heart melted and was thereby filled with the light of *iman*. In his sight, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suddenly became the most beloved of all beings. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 37; Ibn Kathir, as-Sirah, III, 583)

Abu Sufyan was sitting by Kaabah, thinking and weighing his options. Gathering men against the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and resuming his fight against him anew crossed his mind at one stage, especially after seeing the Believers walk behind in large numbers behind the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. He was carried away assessing the

543. See, Ibn Hisham, IV, 32; Waqidi, II, 835; Ibn Saad, II, 142-143.

option, when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, without him realizing, came and stood beside him; and tapping him on the back, right between his shoulder blades, said, "…That is when Allah will make you despicable and disgraced!"

Lifting his head, Abu Sufyan saw the Noble Prophet ﷺ standing beside him, upon which he said, "I could not fully comprehend you being a prophet until now; and now, I repent to Allah for the thoughts that passed through my mind and ask for His forgiveness!" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, IV, 296)

Hind, who had plunged her teeth into Hamza's ﷺ severed liver in the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud, also became Muslim on the Day of *Fath*, and hence enjoyed her share of the general amnesty. She was forgiven by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, for the sake of the honor held by the word of *tawhid*.[544]

Iqrimah, Abu Jahl's son, among the most inveterate enemies of Islam, had fled to Yemen immediately after the arrival of the Muslim army in Mecca. Eventually, he was brought to the presence of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, by his wife, as a Muslim. The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ received him amicably. "Welcome, you wandering cavalier" he said lightheartedly, not holding against him the crimes he had committed against Muslims. (Hakim, III, 271/5059; Waqidi, II, 851-852)

Like Iqrimah, Habbar ibn Aswad was among the most prominent enemies of Islam. With his spear, he had spitefully poked the camel on which Zaynab ﷺ was astride, bound for her Hegira to Medina, causing the daughter of the Noble Prophet ﷺ to fall of, consequently leaving her bloody and bruised, and above all, with a miscarriage of the baby she was pregnant with at the time. Most regrettable was the fact that the severe wound eventually ended being the cause of her death a while later. Habbar was the culprit of many vicious crimes alike. He had fled on the Day of the *Fath* of Mecca, eluding all attempts of being captured. A while later he tentatively appeared in Medina at the presence of the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, as he was sitting with the Companions. All he did was to announce he had become Muslim. Not only did the Prophet ﷺ forgive him, he moreover prohibited all others from even abusing Habbar and throwing him insults.[545] After all, the Holy Quran had stated:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

"Take to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from the ignorant." (al-Araf, 199)

544. Waqidi, II, 850.
545. Waqidi, II, 857-858.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was the Quran come to life. He was the walking display par excellence of Quranic morals. He would forgive all the crimes committed against him without a moment's hesitation. As for crimes committed against others, however, nobody could calm him until he elevated justice to its deserved place and restored the right of the victim. Indeed, together with declaring a never before seen all inclusive amnesty, for the sake of the benefit of the *ummah*, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ also ordered an on the spot execution of a very few number of incurable idolaters, whose conditions were beyond rehabilitation.[546]

No spoils were taken from Mecca.[547] The Noble Messenger ﷺ instead borrowed a loan from the wealthy figures of Mecca to cover the hefty yet necessary expenses of the Muslim army, which he later paid back with the spoils of Hawazin, stating, "A loan merits a thanks and repayment." (Waqidi, II, 863; Abu Dawud, Buyu', 88/3562; Nikah, 44)

With the Meccans still enjoying the ambiance of mercy they were provided by the amnesty of Blessed Prophet ﷺ, it was now noon. As always, the Noble Messenger ﷺ signaled for Bilal Habashi ؓ to call out the *adhan* for the *zuhr* salat. Bilal ؓ remembered the days of his slavery, when he moaned '*Ahad*, *Ahad*' under excruciating torture. Oppression had now reached its twilight. He had now come to Mecca free man, as a member of a triumphant army of *iman*. Thanking Allah, glory unto Him, he climbed on the roof of Kaabah and begun calling out the *adhan*, in a passionate tone. So emotional and touching was Bilal's *adhan* that all the surrounding mountains and the sky were virtually reverberating with its sound. The skies were alight, the ground delighted. The *adhan* Bilal ؓ called that day left a lasting memory for all Believers to cherish. Some of the idolaters who stood witness to the scene were heard to remark, "Shame on us…we could not even be like slaves! Look at how high they are at and how low we have remained!" They were only lamenting their past deeds, the fact that they had remained oblivious to the Truth until then.

The Meccan Pledge of Allegiance

Following the *zuhr* salat, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ ascended the Safa Hill to accept the Meccans' pledge of allegiance. It was first the Qurayshi men to offer their pledge 'on Islam and *jihad*'. The women followed them.[548] Regarding the pledge of women, Allah, glory unto Him, had already pronounced:

546. Abu Dawud, Jihad, 117/2683; Nasai, Tahrîm'ud-Dam, 14.
547. Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 24-25/3023.
548. Ahmad, III, 415; Bukhari, Maghazi, 53.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَّا يُشْرِكْنَ
بِاللهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ
بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِي
مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللهَ إِنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"O Prophet! When believing women come to you, giving you a pledge that they will not ascribe nothing as a partner unto Allah, and will not steal, and will not commit fornication, and will not kill their children, and will not produce any lie that they have forged of themselves, and will not disobey you in what is good, accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (al-Mumtahinah, 12)

Women offered their pledge by dipping their hands in a small pot of water in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had dipped his own hands. There was never a case where the Prophet ﷺ accepted the pledge of women by shaking their hands.

Umaymah bint Ruqayqah ﵂ explains:

"When, as a group of *Ansari* women, we went to the Messenger of Allah and said, 'We give our pledge to you that we will not ascribe nothing as a partner unto Allah, we will not steal, we will not commit fornication, we will not kill our children, we will not forge any lies and we will obey you in your legitimate commands', he replied, 'Only in matters within your power and with what you can cope…'

Hearing these considerate words, we thought, 'Allah and His Messenger are more compassionate towards us than we are towards ourselves…so let's give our pledge!'

The women wanted to shake his hands but the Messenger of Allah said, 'I do not shake hands with women. A word I say to a hundred women counts as if I have said to each of them separately.'" (Muwatta', Bayat, 2; Tirmidhi, Siyar, 37/1597)

Restore Trusts where they are Due!

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ came to Kaabah and sat in a corner opposite to the Sacred House, while the Companions assumed their spots around him. To bring the key to Kaabah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent Bilal ﵁ to Othman ibn Talha ﵁.

"The Messenger of Allah asks you to bring him the key to Kaabah", Bilal ﵁ told Othman, who concurred and to get the key, went to his mother Sulafah who keeping an eye over it at the time.

"I have come to ask for the key to Kaabah", Othman told his mother, "for the Messenger of Allah has commanded me to bring it to him."

"I seek refuge in Allah from you surrendering with your own two hands something your tribe prides itself on! Once he takes the key from you, he shall never return it!" responded Sulafah. Only after a while was Othman able to persuade her mother and get the keys. Upon bringing it to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, he said:

"I give this temporarily as a trust of Allah!" He was afraid he would never be given the keys back. (Waqidi, II, 833; Haythami, VI, 177)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ unlocked the door of Kaabah. Stepping inside, he asked for the door to be closed behind him. He remained in there for a long while, during which he offered two *rakat* of salat. (Waqidi, II, 835; Ibn Saad, II, 137)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then made his way out of Kaabah; and after giving a talk on the occasion of the *fath*, he asked Othman's whereabouts. Othman, who had been present all along, stood up. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then recited the *ayah*:

إِنَّ اللهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَى أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ
النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

"Surely Allah commands you to restore Trusts to those to whom they are due; and when you judge between people, that you judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He gives you! For Allah is He Who hears and sees all things." (an-Nisa, 58)

After that he said, "Sons of Abu Talha! Take the trust of Allah for you to keep permanently, to uphold it with integrity! Nobody shall take it off your hands accept if you begin to oppress! Today is the day of goodness and loyalty!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 31-32; Waqidi, II, 837-838; Ibn Saad, II, 137)

The incident underlines the importance of restoring trusts to those to whom they are due. Giving people what is rightfully their due ensures peace and stability for the individual, the family and the community in general. It is not uncommon for even great empires to collapse when people are denied what they deserve. History bears witness to numerous examples of this nature.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ splendidly reflects the importance of the issue in a *hadith*:

"Wait for Judgment Day, when trusts are denied from their rightful owners!" (Bukhari, Ilim, 2; Ahmad, II, 361)

In short, the denial of trusts from those to whom they are due is one of the signs of the Final Hour.

Abbas ﷺ, who from long before had the privileged duty of supplying water to the pilgrims also asked for the chore of *hijabah*[549] from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said to his uncle:

"I do not entrust you with a task where you will profit from what people will send to you as cover for Kaabah but with the more troublesome chore where you will spend out of your own pocket to take care of the pilgrims' need for water and thereby attain rewards." He then advised his uncle to continue supplying water for the pilgrims.

Abbas ﷺ had a vineyard in Taif. Both before Islam and after, he would carry dried grapes from there, add it to the *zamzam* water and offer it to pilgrims. His sons and grandchildren continued his practice after him. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 32; Ibn Saad, II, 137; Waqidi, II, 838)

On the second day after *zuhr* salat, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stood amid a crowd of people and after sending his praises and thanks to the Almighty, said:

"People…! There is no doubt that Allah has declared Mecca sacred and inviolable the day He created the heavens and earth, the sun and the moon! It shall remain sacred and inviolable until the Final Hour! Without a doubt, Allah did deny the Elephant Army entrance into Mecca but has now made His Messenger and the Believers triumphant in regard. Mecca is permitted to no one after me. Mecca's game is not to be frightened, its thorns not to be cut, property lost therein is not to be picked up except to search for its owner. If one's kin is killed, he could demand the better one of two things: blood-money or retribution (*qisas*)."

Abbas ﷺ then insisted that *idhir*, a type of weed, be exempted from the other plants and scrubs not to be touched. "For we use it in our graves and houses", he said.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon declared, "Except for *idhir*!"[550] (Bukhari, Luqata, 7; Maghazi, 53; Ahmad, IV, 31-32; II, 238)

549. For *hijabah*, see, volume 1, pg. ???

550. A plant with large leaves and a sweet fragrance, the *idhir* is native to Mecca. As well as providing food for animals, it is also used inside houses and graves. Plants, whose cutting has been prohibited within the vicinity of the *Haram*, are specified as 'those which grow on their own'. Together with a degree of controversy regarding the cutting of plants sowed by humans, an overwhelming majority of scholars agree to its permissibility. Cutting from the *miswaq* tree, for instance, as well as pulling

Another incident that took place on the same day displays the profound emotional depths of the Companions' hearts. As the Noble Prophet ﷺ was sitting by Kaabah, Abu Bakr ؓ arrived, with his father Abu Quhafah by his side, whom he had brought to the Prophet's presence.

"You should not have troubled your aged father all the way here", said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ upon seeing the two. "I could have gone to him instead."

"It is more fitting for him to come to you than you to go to him, Messenger of Allah", said Abu Bakr ؓ.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had Abu Quhafah seated in front of him and placing his hand on his heart, said, "Become Muslim Abu Quahafah and find peace!" Abu Quhafah did just that; sincerely repeating the words of *shahadah*, he became Muslim. (Ibn Saad, V, 451)

An Exceptional Loyalty

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ remained in Mecca for fifteen days following the *fath*. The extended time of stay had a prominent number of the *Ansar* agitated, wary that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ would never return to Medina again. Allah, glory unto Him, had after all made him triumphant in a sacred and hallowed town where he was born and had spent a bulk of his life. Praying on the Hill of Safa at the time, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sensed the anxiety of the *Ansar*. After finishing his prayer, he came next to them and asked, "What is it that you are talking about?"

The *Ansar* then gave full voice to their concerns, upon which the Noble Messenger ﷺ, exhibiting an exemplary display of loyalty, stated:

"I seek refuge in Allah from doing such a thing. I immigrated to your land. My life is your life; and so shall my death be next to you!"

The *Ansar* breathed an enormous sigh of relief. (Muslim, Jihad, 84, 86; Ahmad, II, 538)

The Blessed Prophet increased his thanks and gratitude to the Almighty following the *fath* of Mecca; the below *dhikr* especially in the *ruqu* and *sajdah* of his salats:

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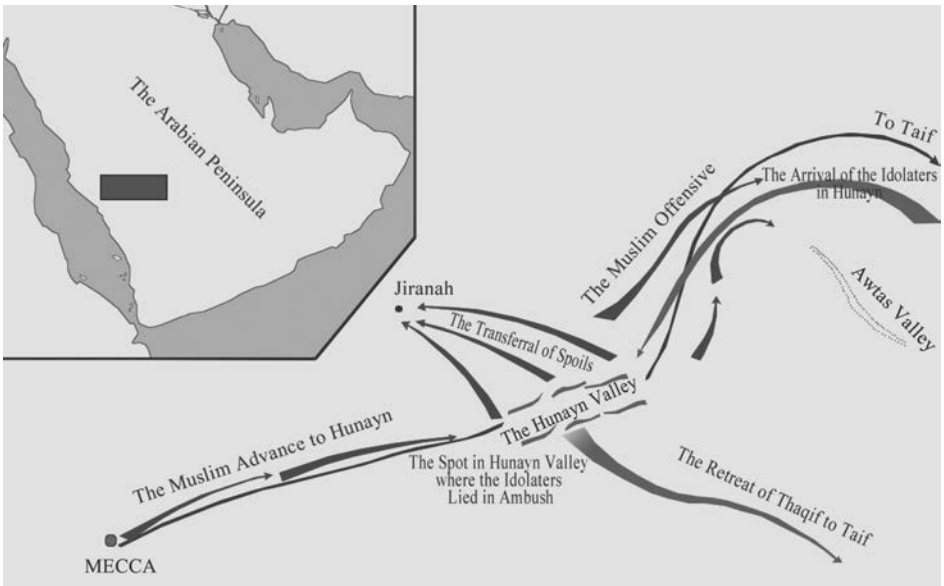
out a leaf or a fruit of a tree is also considered permissible, provided no harm is done to the tree itself. (See, İbrâhim Cânan, *Hadîs Ansiklopedisi,* XII, 525-526)

The cutting of green trees and weed in the *Haram* area of Medina, when need be, is considered permissible. Because Medina is an area that thrives on agriculture, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was asked permission in regard, and as a consequence, the town was given a greater concession than Mecca concerning the use of plants. Hunting outside of Medina was given a like concession. (See, Hamdi Döndüren, *Şâmil İslâm Ansiklopedisi,* "Harem" entry)

"I glorify Allah and negate His exalted Essence, at all times, from all the deficiencies improper to His Essence, Attributes, Actions and Names; venerate and thank Him with all the praises He deserves. I ask Allah to forgive me and repent for all my sins."

When Aisha ﵂ asked the reason behind this prayer, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ explained, "My Lord had revealed to me that I would see a sign in my *ummah*, and when I did, to say this prayer a lot. I now see that sign." (Muslim, Salat, 220)

Indeed, through *surah* Nasr, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ had been commanded to increase his repentance and glorification of the Almighty when he did ultimately receive Divine help and triumph, and saw people enter Islam in masses. The word *nasr*, eponymous with the name of the particular *surah*, has been interpreted with supremacy over all Arabs, and *fath* with the conquest of Mecca. Proceeding from the meaning of the word *fath*, which is 'to open', Ibn Abbas ﵄ labeled the triumph in Mecca as the *fath* of all *fath*s, as it meant the 'opening' to Islam of a town in which stood the Sacred House, Kaabah. *Fath* is not a mere conquest of a land previously controlled by the enemy. It is rather the 'opening' of the hearts of the people therein to the religion of Allah, glory unto Him, and in turn, the 'opening' of the gates of Islam to them, and ultimately, to entire humankind. On that day, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not so much conquer a town as 'open' the hearts of her dwellers to Islam. The *fath* of Mecca has therefore been regarded the beginning of Islam's march in opening the world to Islam. The road to 'opening' all of Arabia and from there the entire world to Islam, first began with the 'opening' of the door of Kaabah. To be sure, it was an event the remainder of the tribes in Arabia had been waiting for, an


The Arabian Peninsula
To Taif
The Arrival of the Idolaters in Hunayn
The Muslim Offensive
Awtas Valley
Jiranah
The Transferral of Spoils
The Hunayn Valley
The Muslim Advance to Hunayn
The Spot in Hunayn Valley where the Idolaters Lied in Ambush
The Retreat of Thaqif to Taif
MECCA

episode on which their ultimate acceptance of Islam hinged. They were thinking, "Leave the man to deal first with his own tribe. If he is able to triumph over them that means he is a true prophet!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 53)

According to a narration from Hasan Basri, when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ triumphed over Mecca, the Arabs commented, "If Muhammad ﷺ has been able to become victorious over the Meccans, when the Almighty protected them from the Elephant Army, then there is no way we could harm him!" That is when they begun entering the religion of Allah, glory unto Him, in masses. (Elmalılı, IX, 6236-6238)

The Battle of Hunayn (11 Shawwal, 8 / 1 February, 630)

The Blessed Prophet not only destroyed the idols in and around Kaabah, he also sent units to rid the surrounding towns of these lifeless stones of idolatry. A purification of *tawhid* had begun.[551] The tribe of Hawazin of Hunayn and the Banu Thaqif of Taif could not stomach this, however, and they decided to launch an attack against the Believers. Preparing a huge army, they set out, bringing along all their belongings with them, as if they had embarked on a battle of life and death.[552]

Learning of their preparation to attack, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ responded by preparing the army of Believers, enlisting another two-thousand Meccans who had recently become Muslim. How ironic a Divine manifestation it was that Abu Sufyan, who had fought the Believers for years in the name of idols, causing them much grief and torment in the process, was now also marching along as a Believer in the Muslim army, ready to fight this time for Islam. The army even included around eighty Meccan idolaters.[553]

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551. Waqidi, III, 873. When Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ returned to Mecca after destroying the idol Uzza with a unit of three-hundred-and-fifty Believers, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent him to the Banu Jazimah tribe to invite them to *iman* in Allah, glory unto Him. Resulting from a misunderstanding, Khalid ﷺ killed around thirty people from the tribe. Once the news reached the Noble Prophet ﷺ, he lifted his hands aloft and prayed, twice, 'Allah…I submit to You that I am distant from what Khalid has done!' and sought refuge in the Almighty. He then sent Ali ﷺ with a hefty amount of money to Banu Jazimah and had him compensate for the incident by paying blood-money to the victims' families. Ali ﷺ compensated for all their property seized as spoils, even the damaged water troughs for dogs. He then left the money left over with Banu Jazimah, so that they could cover the additional damages they would in all likelihood become aware of later on. When Ali ﷺ returned to the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ and explained to him the course of action he took, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "You have done well; just the right thing!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 58, Ahkâm 35; Nasai, Âdâbu'l-Kudât, 16; Ibn Hisham, IV, 53-57; Waqidi, III, 875-884)
    The incident shows the enormity of compassion and mercy the Blessed Prophet ﷺnurtured and how he observed the created from the perspective of the Creator. The compensations of even the damaged water troughs for dogs provides an exemplary standard for observing the rights of animals.
552. Ibn Hisham, IV, 65; Ibn Saad, II, 150.
553. Ibn Hisham, IV, 68; Waqidi, III, 890.

In all respects, the Muslim army looked invincible, marching towards Hunayn with a dazzling splendor. Never before had Arabia seen an army so well equipped and organized, people thought. And for a moment, the magnificent scene allowed a dust of pride to creep in to the Companions' hearts. Supposing 'such an army could never be defeated', they began belittling the enemy and thought a victory was certain on their physical power alone. It was this moment of pride and vanity that subjected the Believers to undergo a severe Divine test:

In the dark of the night, still a while before dawn, as the vanguard forces of the Muslim army were advancing with self-confidence along the narrow straits leading to Hunayn, they were suddenly ambushed by the enemy who had been lying in wait. Panic and disarray took over thereafter. The Believers were thwarted by a barrage of arrows shot at them from who knows where and found themselves in a state of hesitancy, leading not long after to an almost irrevocable state confusion and disorder, which soon took equal hold of the rear forces. The Muslims were forced to retreat but Hawazin and Banu Thaqif were eagerly pursuing them, with no intention of halting the chase.

It was only the Blessed Prophet ﷺ who courageously stood his ground amid the disastrous disarray, constantly advancing his mount deeper into the enemy ranks, virtually throwing himself right in their middle. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ that day exhibited a matchless spectacle of bravery and valor, in spite of the desperate efforts of both his uncle Abbas and Abu Sufyan ﷺ, clutching the reins of his mount to stop him advancing any further, lest something would happen to him.[554]

The confusion of the Muslim army was meanwhile continuing, showing no signs of recovery. "The spell has been broken today", some were heard shouting, while others cried out in despair "only by making it to the sea can we stop this routing!" Even heard from the Meccan ranks were rumors that "the Prophet had been killed and that the Arabs would soon be returning to their religion of old!"

Yet, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was alive and well, standing strong on his mount, adamantly resisting the enemy. His trust placed, as always, in the Almighty, he was calling out to his Companions:

"*Ansar…Muhajirun*! The servants of Allah! Come here! I am the servant and messenger of Allah!"

He then signaled Abbas ﷺ, known for his strong voice, to continue calling out to Muslim soldiers. At the top of his voice, Abbas ﷺ shouted, "Those who pledged at Aqabah…Those who pledged under the tree of Ridvan! Run! The Messenger of Allah is here!"

554. Muslim, Jihad, 76.

The Companions, hearing the echoes of the call, ran next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Like butterflies, momentarily swung about by a forceful gale, they had regathered around an attracting light. The Believers' hearts, united once more around the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, were cleansed of their previous fears and reinstated with their former peace. With the grace of Allah, glory unto Him, the entire ranks of the Muslim army regained their momentum. Thereupon, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ lifted his hands aloft and prayed, "O my Lord! Grant me the victory You promised!"

Just as he had done in the Battle of Badr, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ then grabbed a handful of soil and flung it towards the enemy, after which he declared to his Companions:

"Now advance, with honesty and loyalty!" (Muslim, Jihad, 76-31; Ahmad, III, 157, V, 286; Ibn Hisham, IV, 72; Waqidi, III, 897-899)

The Muslim army now launched a fresh offensive on the enemy, as if the battle had only just begun. Facing the wave of a vigorous assault, Hawazin and Banu Thaqif could not hold their ground for long and were, in a short amount of time, defeated. The Believers only had four martyrs, while the coalition ended up leaving around seventy casualties. So decisively were they defeated that they had to leave all of what they had brought along with them on the battlefield. There was no counting the amount of spoils they had to relinquish.[555]

Doubtless, this was a blessing Allah, glory unto Him, had granted the Believers. Despite being almost down and out as early as the beginning of the Battle, thanks to the courage and perseverance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his heartfelt prayers to the Almighty, they were ultimately able to claim victory. Allah, glory unto Him, depicts this in the Holy Quran in the following:

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ. ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Certainly Allah helped you in many battlefields and on the day of Hunain, when your great numbers made you vain, but they availed you nothing and the earth became strait to you notwithstanding its spaciousness, then you turned back retreating. Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon

555. Ibn Hisham, IV, 79.

the believers, and sent down hosts which you did not see, and chastised those who disbelieved, and that is the reward of the unbelievers." (at-Tawba, 25-26)

In fact, those who accepted Islam after having fought at Hunayn on the side of the enemy, have later testified to seeing soldiers, whom 'they had never before seen', attack them, which testifies to the Divine aid the Believers were reinforced with that day.[556]

A portion of the defeated Hawazin army ended up fleeing to Taif, others to Nakhlah, while some encamped at Awtas.[557]

Now victorious at Hunayn, The Blessed Prophet ﷺ ordered the pursuit of the fleeing enemy and had the prisoners and spoils transferred to Jiranah. Afterward, to bring the campaign to completion, he sent a unit commanded by Abu Amir, Abu Musa al-Ashari's uncle, to Awtas, while he turned the direction of Muslim army towards Taif.

The Battle of Awtas (Shawwal, 8 / February, 630)

In the Battle of Awtas, where the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was not present owing to his march on Taif, Abu Amir ﷺ, the commander of the Muslim forces, was martyred. In turn, the enemy commander was also slain.

Inflicted with a fatal wound and having lost all hope of survival, Abu Amir ﷺ turned to his nephew Abu Musa ﷺ and told him to, "Send my greetings to the Messenger of Allah and ask him to pray for my forgiveness!"

Assuming leadership after the loss of his uncle, Abu Musa ﷺ prevented the Muslim forces for scattering. A perfect line of attack soon enabled to him rout the enemy and wave the flag of Islam victoriously at Awtas. Upon his return next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, he informed him of his uncle's will. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon asked for some water to take *wudu*, after which he lifted his hands aloft and prayed, "O my Lord! Forgive your servant Abu Amir! On the Day of Judgment, raise him to a rank higher than most of those whom You have created!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 55)

The Siege of Taif (Shawwal, 8 / February, 630)

Taif, a prominent town in Hijaz worthy of being called a paradise on earth, had a strongly fortified castle set on a hilltop. The siege laid by the Muslim army on Taif therefore proved to be a demanding and severe struggle.

556. Ahmad, V, 286; Haythami, VI, 182-183; Ibn Hisham, IV, 79.
557. Ibn Hisham, IV, 84.

The Siege of Taif was not a revenge for the maltreatment the Blessed Prophet was subjected to years ago by her locals but was rather a continuation and the final curtain of the Battle of Hunayn. A significant amount of the enemy soldiers including their leader Malik ibn Awf, who fled from the passage of Hunayn, had come to Taif, seeking refuge in the castle. There, allying themselves with Banu Thaqif once more, they prepared for a brand new war of defense.

The Siege saw the Muslims put numerous strategies and various new equipments to use. Yet, the walls of the castle were holding strong against the string of attempts by the Believers to pass over. Neither were they able to draw the enemy outside of the castle. When Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ called on them to send a warrior outside for a one-on-one challenge they shouted out, "We do not have anyone that can stand his ground against you!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon remarked, "The enemy has now retreated into its den like a fox. Even if left to their own doing, they will not be able to inflict harm anymore!" They were now debilitated as it was and the Noble Messenger ﷺ, being the prophet of mercy he was, saw no further point in prolonging the siege, as he wished for the guidance of the people of Taif, not their annihilation. Before long, he commanded for the siege to be lifted.

As the siege was coming to an end, the Companions asked for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to curse Banu Thaqif, who were inflicting much damage on the Muslims. But the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ instead prayed for their guidance. "My Lord! Grant guidance to Banu Thaqif! Send them to us!" he implored Allah, glory unto Him, right before his departure from Taif. Before long, Banu Thaqif came to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ of its own accord and became Muslim. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 134; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 73/3942)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not merely avoid cursing a tribe that years ago pelted him with stones, leaving him bloodied and bruised, but he also nurtured a genuine desire for their guidance. Indeed, their arrival a year later to express their wish to become Muslim made the Blessed Prophet ﷺ so happy that he spared a few days to attend to them.

The most important gain from the Siege of Taif, for the time being, was the acceptance of Islam by the numerous slaves from the other side, who, following the promise of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that they would become free if they became Muslim, defected from the enemy army and joined the Believers.[558]

Abu Zuraa ﷺ recounts:

558. Bukhari, Maghazi, 56.

"When the Messenger of Allah asked for his mount as he was leaving Qarn'u Manazil during the Taif Campaign, I prepared his camel Qaswa. I held its reins until he mounted it; then handing the reins over, I sat on the saddle behind him. The Messenger of Allah was gently lashing the camel in the back with his whip to get it moving and being behind him, I was feeling the lash strike me each time. He then looked behind and asked, 'Is the whip hitting you?' 'Yes, Messenger of Allah', I replied, 'may both my parents be sacrificed in your way!'

Afterwards we reached Jiranah, where there was some sheep held near a corner. The Messenger of Allah asked something about them to the man in charge of the spoils and the man gave the information demanded of him. Right after their conversation, the Messenger of Allah called out for me. 'Here I am, Messenger of Allah', I responded.

'Take these sheep', said the Messenger of Allah, 'in return for the whip lashes you received in the evening!' I counted the sheep; there were exactly one-hundred and twenty in number. Those were the possessions I benefited the most from." (Waqidi, III, 939)

The sensitivity shown by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ here towards the rights of others would suffice to shed a guiding light over all times and places.

The Distribution of the Spoils

After lifting the siege on Taif, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ lead the Muslim army to Jiranah, where the captives and spoils were held. Arriving around the same time with his forces was Abu Musa al-Ashari ؓ, returning victorious from the Battle of Awtas. The Believers had scattered all their enemies and time had now come to distribute the spoils. The sum of spoils seized from all the recent battles amounted to twenty-four thousand camels, forty-thousand sheep and four-thousand uqiyyah worth of silver, not to mention six-thousand captives.[559]

Before beginning to distribute the spoils, the Noble Prophet ﷺ declared, "Let those who have anything of the spoils with them, even if it be a needle or a string, return it! Know that treachery with regard to spoils brings shame and fire for its culprit in the Hereafter!" (Muwatta, Jihad, 22' Ahmad, V, 316)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ was meanwhile informed that Shayma ؓ, his foster sister, was also among the captives. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ immediately had her brought next to him. He took of his *rida* and laying it on the ground for her to sit, welcomed her with kindness and compassion. Seeing Shayma ؓ made the Blessed Prophet ﷺ reminisce their childhood days. His eyes welled up. He asked her about

559. Ibn Saad, II, 152.

her parents, who, as it turned out, had passed away a number of years ago. After asking her about her relatives, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then said:

"If you wish, you can remain with me where you will be treated with much love and respect. But if you wish, I can also give some possessions and see you off to your tribe. I can do that too!"

Shayma ﷺ chose to return to her tribe and after that became Muslim. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave both her and her living family members quite a number of camels and sheep. He also presented her with two slaves, one male and the other female who were later married to each other by Shayma ﷺ. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 91-92; Waqidi, III, 913)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ then delayed for a little while longer distributing the spoils. Those with weaknesses in their hearts, who could not see the underlying wisdom of this delay, were disgruntled. The Bedouin Arabs, especially, demanded the distribution immediately. They even cornered the Blessed Prophet ﷺ astride his camel beneath a *samurrah* tree, to the point where his coat got caught up in one of its branches. He halted his camel and stated, "Give me my coat! If I had spoils as many as these trees, I still would have distributed them amongst you in their entirety; and then you would have seen that I am neither a miser, nor a liar, nor a coward!" (Bukhari, Jihad, 24)

Later, even when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ actually begun distributing the spoils, the crowd piled up around him was causing him so much discomfort that, finally, referring to a bygone prophet, he remarked, "Allah had sent one of his servants to a tribe, who beat him up and split his head open. But that servant, while wiping the blood running down from his head with his hand, was simply praying, 'Forgive my tribe, my Lord, for they do not know what they are doing!'" (Ahmad, I, 456; Muslim, Jihad, 105)

The reason behind the delay came to light only on the tenth day of their arrival at Jiranah. On that day an envoy from the defeated Hawazin came to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ announcing their acceptance of Islam and asking therefore for the return of their captives and seized possessions. Speaking on their behalf, a man from the Saad Clan rose and said, "Those waiting under the shade now, Messenger of Allah, are your foster aunts, maternal and paternal, and women who milkfed you and looked after you as a child! Had we been the ones to have milkfed and looked after, say, the King of Syria or Iraq, and having fallen in a like situation asked for their compassion and benevolence, they would not have denied us! Yet you are the best anyone can care for and look after!"

"I delayed the distribution of the spoils until today", then said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "but you have arrived quite late. Now chose between your captives or your belongings!"

The envoy opted for their captives. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then said, "I return to you the captives that fell to my lot and to the sons of Abdulmuttalib. Come to me tomorrow after *zuhr* salat for the others!"

The next day, the Noble Prophet ﷺ gathered his Companions and explained them the situation. Informing them that he had returned the slaves that fell to his lot, he said, "Whoever wishes to free their captives willingly and thereby make their brothers happy, let him do so. And whoever wishes not to give that which has fallen to his lot free of charge then we shall compensate him with the first spoils Allah will grant us. Those who wish so can opt for that!"

That the Blessed Prophet ﷺ consulted the Companions over the issue is because of the fact that they had a free right of exercise over the captives.

The Companions, seeing the Prophet of Allah ﷺ set his own captives free, without further ado, gladly set their own captives free, too, enthusiastic to reap their own share of the rewards awaiting them in return. "And we, too," they said, "hereby return our captives to the Messenger of Allah!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 54; Ibn Hisham, IV, 134-135)

Thus, thousands of captives were handed over to Hawazin that day, free of ransom. Such a scene was never before seen in history. But now, history was made to behold the spectacle of thousands of captives being set free without any worldly return, all thanks to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who had vitalized his *ummah* with Islamic morals.

It was a profound display of loyalty shown by the Noble Messenger ﷺ to a people, for the sake of a woman to have breastfed him as a toddler, who had hailed among them. It is an exceptional lesson of virtue for those who are blinded to the very notion; especially when one thinks that human beings, on the whole, tend to completely erase the bleak memories of favors received from others, rather than to bring them up. Loyalty is thereby turned into a word merely found in dictionaries.

Moved by this immense act of loyalty, the entire Hawazin tribe accepted Islam. Even their leader, Malik ibn Awf, who was at Taif at the time, was so utterly yet pleasantly astonished to hear the news, that it only took a small invitation by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ for him to enter the folds of Islam. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ granted him a hundred camels and reinstated him as the leader of his tribe.[560]

560. Ibn Hisham, IV, 137-138.

The greatest lesson to be drawn from all this is that the best mode of *tabligh* is through good morals. It also points to the fact that while a prudent diplomatic approach is a means for greater goodness, a senseless approach is sure to engender damage of a greater scale.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ distributed the spoils, justly, in the best possible manner. Of the five shares the spoils were divided into, four were distributed among the soldiers, while one was allocated to the *Bayt'ul-Mal*, or the Treasury. Although the Treasury was at the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ disposal, he did not utilize it for personal use, as he indicated to his Companions, before beginning the distribution, by plucking a hair from the camel in front of him and saying:

"I have not the least to do with your spoils; not even its hair, let alone a camel… Why are you impatient? Even if the spoils are as many as the stones and trees of this valley, I will hand them out to you. If I spare a fifth of these, it is only to spend on the poor among you!" (Muwatta', Jihad, 22; Ahmad, V, 316)

In line with the Divine command given him, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ handed out an extra share from that fifth to the *muallafat'ul-qulub*, that is those whose hearts were to be endeared to Islam. Among them was Hakim ibn Hizam, who explains:

"I wanted the Messenger of Allah to give me some of the spoils. He gave me a hundred camels. I asked for more and he gave me another hundred. I asked yet again and he gave me yet another hundred. He then said, 'Surely possessions, Hakim, are alluring and sweet. Whoever takes them free of greed shall reap abundance from them. Whoever sets his eyes on them and seizes them with greed shall find no abundance in them. Such people are like those who eat and eat without ever getting full. The hand that gives is better than the hand that receives.'

Thereupon, I said, 'By Allah who has sent you with the true religion, Messenger of Allah, so long as I am alive, I will never accept anything from anyone else but you.'"

Hakim ﷺ then took only the first hundred camels he was given by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, forfeiting the rest. Years later a day came when Caliph Abu Bakr ﷺ called him to hand out his share of the spoils but he refused. Later on, Caliph Omar ﷺ summoned him to give him something of the spoils, only to have Hakim refuse once again. Realizing there was no way he could convince Hakim ﷺ to take what he was offering, Omar ﷺ felt obliged to say to those who were present:

"Bear witness Muslims that I am giving his share of the spoils allocated to him by Allah but he is not taking it!" Hakim ﷺ kept true to his word not to take anything from anyone so long as he remained alive. (Bukhari, Wasaya, 9; Waqidi, III, 945)

Still not a Muslim, the Qurayshi notable Safwan ibn Umayya had, regardless, not left the side of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ at both Hunayn and Taif. Safwan was also there with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ as he was walking amid the spoils at Jiranah inspecting them. The astonished Safwan was admiringly gazing at the valley full of camels, sheep and shepherds keeping an eye on them. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, watching Safwan with the corner of his eye, asked:

"Do you like what you see of the valley?"

"Yes", replied Safwan.

"You can have it both…the valley and what's on it!"

Unable to contain himself, Safwan remarked, "Only the heart of a prophet could be so generous!" immediately after which he pronounced the word of *shahadah* and became Muslim. (Waqidi, II, 854-855)

Safwan ﷺ later returned to Quraysh, exclaiming, "Become Muslim my people. By Allah, Muhammad is giving away in plentitude, without the least fear of poverty!" (Muslim, Fadail, 57-58)

Around forty *muallafa'tul-qulub,* including Abu Sufyan, Aqra ibn Habis, Uyaynah ibn Hisn, Abbas ibn Mirdas and Malik ibn Awf, were handed a dazzling amount of possessions.[561]

A poet by the name of Abbas ibn Mirdas, unsatisfied with the amount given to him, recited a bitter poem about the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. When he found out, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ called him and said:

"I will cut your tongue off!" Prior to that, however, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ had told Bilal Habashi ﷺ to, "…give him a pair of clothes when I order you to cut his tongue off!"

When the time came, the Prophet ﷺ signaled Bilal to "…go and cut his tongue off!" As Bilal took hold of him by the arm, Abbas began to scream, "Is the Messenger of Allah going to cut my tongue off? *Muhajirun*! He is going to cut my tongue off! *Ansar*! He is going to cut my tongue off!" Bilal ﷺ continued escorting him away, his hands firmly clutching his arms. But when Abbas raised his screams to a higher pitch, Bilal ﷺ said, "Be quiet! The Messenger of Allah commanded me to silence you with a pair of clothes!" Bilal ﷺ then gave an extra pair to Abbas, who by then had calmed down. Ultimately though, he was given a further one-hundred camels by the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ. (Ibn Saad, IV, 273; Muslim, Zakat, 137)

During the distribution of the spoils, Saad ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ commented, "Messenger of Allah, you left a poor man like Juayl ibn Suraqa and gave notables like

561. Waqidi, III, 944-947.

Uyaynah and Aqra a hundred camels each!" To that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ replied, "By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my life resides, even if the earth was to abound with people like Uyaynah and Aqra, Juayl would still be better than all of them put together! But I am looking after these people to warm them to Islam and to refer Juayl to Islam, to which he is firmly attached, and to the superior rewards prepared for him in the Hereafter!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 143; Ibn Saad, IV, 246)

That the *muallafat'ul-qulub* were given plenty of spoils was misunderstood by many and it caused some discomfort among the Companions. Someone by the name of Dhu'l-Huwaysirah, from the Tamim Clan, even crossed the line and remonstrated disrespectfully, exclaiming, "Be just, Messenger of Allah!" Much grieved by this reaction, the Blessed Prophet said, "Is that so? And who is going to be just, if I myself am not?" (Muslim, Zakat, 148)

It was not much long before a Revelation arrived:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَلْمِزُكَ فِى الصَّدَقَاتِ فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِنْ لَّمْ
يُعْطَوْا مِنهَا إِذَا هُمْ يَسْخَطُونَ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوْا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا
حَسْبُنَا اللهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللهِ رَاغِبُونَ

"And of them there are those who blame you with respect to the alms; so if they are given from it they are pleased, and if they are not given from it, lo! they are full of rage. And if they were content with what Allah and His Messenger gave them, and had said: Allah is sufficient for us; Allah will soon give us (more) out of His grace and His Messenger too; surely to Allah do we make our petition." (at-Tawbah, 58-59)

The *ayah* brings to light that despite being dealt out by the Prophet ﷺ, the distribution of spoils was in fact a Divine act. It also emphasizes the difference between the ignorant and the contended of heart.

Most of the reaction, in fact, came from the way of *Ansar*. But it was not from the general share, that is the four-fifths of the spoils, that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ handed out this generous portion. It was rather from what was called *fay*, the one-fifth of the spoils over which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ exercised exclusive control. Yet even that seemed to provoke the reaction of some young *Ansari* men.[562] To settle the objections that were coming in regard, the Noble Messenger ﷺ gathered the *Ansar*, before the situation got out of hand. In a gathering to which nobody except for the *Ansar* was admitted, to make them understand the core of the matter, the Blessed

562. Kâmil Mîras, *Tecrîd Tercemesi,* X, 341.

Prophet ﷺ addressed them in the following manner, reminding them of the favors they had received from the Almighty:

'*Ansar*…! I hear of the complaints about me that run through your hearts. But tell me…Were you not shown the right path by Allah, through me, when you were astray? Did you not become rich after I came to you, when before that you were poor? Were your hearts not united by Allah with my arrival, when spite and enmity were eating you away?"

To all those questions, the *Ansar* replied, "All gratitude is for and blessings are from Allah and His Messenger!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ continued his moving speech. "If you were to tell me, Ansar", he declared, "You came to us when your people had denied you and we affirmed you! We aided you when your people deserted you! Your people drove you out and we embraced you! You were poor and we made you partner to our wealth', I would have then affirmed you, too, and said 'you are speaking the truth!' *Ansar*…! Is it true that you have said certain things because I gave some worldly goods to certain people? Were you upset over me giving some worthless goods of the world to some just to warm their hearts to Islam and deprived you of them, trusting the strength and maturity of your *iman*...is that what distresses you? *Ansar*…Would not you want to return home with your Prophet while everybody else returns with their possessions?"

The tears that had already welled up in the eyes of the *Ansar* now began to spill over and freely flow over the touching words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. They were weeping as they said, "We want to return home with you, Messenger of Allah". Their undying love for him was suddenly rejuvenated. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, too, was crying with them. To comfort them and in appreciation of the devotion they expressed, the Noble Prophet ﷺ then said, "*Ansar*…Had there not been the honor and virtue of Hegira, I surely would have wanted to be from the *Ansar*. *Ansar*…If every person was to take a path, I will still be sure to follow the path of *Ansar*!"

Following this emotional meeting, the former complaints made way for feelings of contentedness with "Allah and His Messenger", which became the only sentiments reverberating from *Ansari* ranks thereafter. A wound caused by a misunderstanding was hence permanently healed by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 56; Muslim, Zakat, 135; Haythami, X, 31)

There are many lessons for us to take from the above exemplary conduct of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. By nature, human beings have a soft spot for kindness and being on the receiving end of generosity. An enemy treated generously is an enemy no more; and if already a friend, the friendship will only become more intimate.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ entered *ihram* for *umrah* and left Jiranah following a thirteen day stay there.[563] It has therefore been considered to be of greater merit for those who stay in and around the vicinity of Mecca to enter *ihram* at Jiranah.

The Punishment for Killing a Muslim

Before setting out from Medina**,** the Noble Messenger ﷺ had sent a small unit under Abu Qatadah towards Najd, as a maneuver to conceal the ultimate destination of the Muslim army. When the unit reached Izam, they were met with by a man by the name of Amir ibn Adbat, who greeting the Muslim unit and saying the word of *shahadah*, informed them he had become Muslim. But owing to a past dispute he had with Amir, Muhallim ibn Jassamah, from the Muslim cavalry unit, claimed that Amir was only a pretender and killed him, seizing his belongings as spoils in the process.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had just completed his *zuhr* salat in the Hunayn Valley and was sitting under a tree amid his Companions when Abu Qatadah and his unit eventually returned from Najd. The incident was made known to him, sparking at the instant the below *ayah*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمُ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

“O you who believe! When you go to war in Allah’s way, make investigation, and do not say to any one who offers you peace: You are not a believer. Do you seek goods of this world’s life! But with Allah there are abundant gains; you too were such before, then Allah conferred a benefit on you; therefore make investigation; surely Allah is aware of what you do.” (an-Nisa, 94)

Shortly thereafter, Amir’s family arrived to charge Muhallim with murder. After a lengthy trial, with the approval of Amir’s family, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sentenced Muhallim to a payment of blood-money to the victim’s family.

“So you killed Amir even though he told you he was a Muslim…” then reproved the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Muhallim could only say, “Pray for my forgiveness, Messenger of Allah!” which was practically an admission that he had committed the crime, knowingly. Having

563. Bukhari, Umrah, 3; Tirmidhi, Hajj, 92/935.

taken the life of an innocent person in spite of him being a Muslim, Muhallim's crime was not of a kind that could be easily forgiven. The slightest show of tolerance in this regard would have made it impossible to curb future crimes of the kind. The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ therefore refused Muhallim's request for a prayer of forgiveness and even stated, "May Allah not forgive you!"[564]

Afflicted with the anger of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Muhallim went home where he remined in hiding. He eventually died from excess grief a week later. When his family tried burying him, the ground pushed his corpse back out. No matter how many times they tried, the same happened each time. Helpless and astounded, they came to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and explained him their dilemma.

"The earth has accepted many others worse than him in her bosom", said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "but Allah wishes to teach you a lesson and the value of *La ilaha ill-Allah*!" He then advised them to bury Muhallim once again by this time placing stones on his grave. (Ahmad, V, 112; Ibn Majah, Fitan, 1; Ibn Hisham, IV, 302; Waqidi, III, 919)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ acted this way in order to stress the severity of violating the right and honor of *La ilaha ill-Allah* and of another Muslim, to show how terrible a sin it is to kill a fellow Muslim for the mere sake of worldly goods and to thereby emphatically deter others from committing like crimes.

The incident proves that all people who profess the word of *tawhid* are to be regarded as Muslim. Unless a person blatantly shows his disbelief, it is impermissible to doubt his *iman*.

The incident again shows just how important it is for Muslims to look at the external facts of the matter when passing judgment on it. Considering there is always an element of deception even when passing judgment based on external facts, had humans been given the privilege of basing their verdicts on inner motives, the exact determining of which is a sheer impossibility, they would not have been able to steer clear from committing many an injustice owing to their subjective interpretations.

Another reason behind the obligation to pass judgment based on external facts is to prevent certain people, from clinging onto excuses like 'look at my heart, not my deeds' to justify their flawed deeds and shortcomings. This tactic frequently resorted to in this day and age is instantly annulled by the above principle instated by Islam and by the practice of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Passing judgment according to external facts may seem to provide a temporary loop hole for hypocrites by giving them an opportunity to conceal their inner hypocrisy with outward deeds;

564. The Companion who has narrated the hadith says, "Amongst ourselves, we used to say that 'the Messenger of Allah prayed for his forgiveness but acted that way to express the gravity of what Muhallim had done and to prevent people from killing each other.'" (Ahmad, V, 112; Ibn Hisham, IV, 304)

still, it provides a barrier against trying to implement justice with evidence based on guesswork, rather than conviction.

The Assigning of a Governor and a Teacher for Mecca

Before leaving Mecca, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ assigned Attab ibn Asid ؓ as governor, to administer the town as well as to regulate affairs related to pilgrimage. Prior to that, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had already left Attab ؓ as deputy in Mecca when setting out to the Battle of Hunayn. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 69, 148) Attab ؓ was around twenty years of age at the time.[565] Despite there being Companions of greater experience and virtue, it was Attab ؓ who was entrusted with governorship. This shows that posts and duties ought to be given to people of ability, who exert knowledge and virtue, and who are known for their piousness and integrity.

Indeed, the Companions who lent the most paramount service in conveying Islam to future generations were, more often than not, youths like Attab ibn Asid ؓ. For instance, Abdullah ibn Omar and Ibn Abbas ؓ, among those to have narrated the most number of *ahadith*, were merely thirteen years old at the time of the passing away of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, while Anas, Ibn Masud and Aisha ؓ were eighteen. Again, most of the Companions present in the Pledge of Aqabah were young; so were a majority of the teachers of the Quran martyred by the Maunah Well. This shows just how vital it is to attend to the education of youth, who will potentially assume important duties that will shape the future of Islam.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ always wanted for new Muslims to learn the Quran and Sunnah without wasting any time. He would therefore subject those who came to him as Muslims to an intense training next to his Companions, even it if be for a few days. At *fajr* salat, he would check to see what they had learnt and if their knowledge was still inadequate, he would send them to other Companions and ensure they learnt their instructions properly.

Consequent upon this sensitivity towards the teaching of Islam, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ left Muadh ibn Jabal[566] and Abu Musa al-Ashari[567] ؓ in Mecca to teach the locals the Quran and *fiqh*, that is the rulings of Islam. This provides categorical evidence for the importance we ought to ascribe to the teaching of Islam.

565. Hâkim, III, 303/5181.
566. Waqidi, III, 959.
567. Ibn Saad, II, 160.

THE NINTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

The Sword of Language

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent a small cavalry unit under the leadership of Uyaynah ﷺ to the Banu Tamim tribe, for having recoiled from paying alms. In a swift raid, the Believers triumphed over the rebels and returned to Medina with a sizeable amount of spoils and captives.[568]

A large number of Banu Tamim's notables, accompanied by their leading poets, thereupon came to the Noble Messenger ﷺ to salvage their captives. While waiting for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to appear inside the *Masjid*, they grew impatient and shouted rather disrespectfully "Come on now! Come out next to us!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ felt ill-at-ease from all their shouting. Revealed moments later, was the following *ayah*:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

"As for) those who call out to you from behind the private chambers, surely most of them do not understand." (al-Hujurat, 4) (Ibn Hisham, IV, 223, 233)

Following *zuhr* salat, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sat in the courtyard of the *Masjid*.

"We have brought our poets and orators so we can recite poems to each another", said the spokesman of the tribe.

"I have not been sent to recite poems", responded the Blessed Prophet. "But you can go ahead." (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, I, 128)

A man from the tribe then rose to his feet and gave an eloquent speech. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then signaled for Thabit ibn Qays ﷺ, who then got up and delivered an exceptional speech on the splendor of Allah, glory unto Him and the prophethood of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, far more superior than that delivered by the spokesperson of Tamim.

A poem recited by Zibriqan ibn Badr from Banu Tamim was then countered by an eloquent and affective ode, delivered by the illustrious Hassan ibn Thabit ﷺ, paying homage to the honor of the religion of Islam

568. Bukhari, Maghazi, 68.

The triumph of the Companions was due to their immersion in the Holy Quran, an extraordinary pinnacle of language, and from their training in the presence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the most articulate and beautiful speaker ever to come, known therefore as *jawami'ul-kalim* for his divine ability to express profound meanings in just a few simple words. This inspiration exuded by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ has been given a splendid voice in the poem:

Seeing him for one moment, into a rose one turns,
Nightingales, they become, who hear his words…

Aware of the outcome, poet Aqra ibn Habis from Tamim exclaimed, "His orators are better than our orators and his poets are far more superior to ours. Their words are simply above ours!" After these words, he declared his acceptance of Islam, a move his friends followed without hesitation. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then handed an abundant amount of gifts to the members of the envoy. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 232)

At that point, a minor argument erupted between Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ in the presence of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, occasioning the revelation of the following *ayat*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ إِنَّ اللهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

"O you who believe! Be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing. O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another, lest your deeds became null while you do not perceive." (al-Hujurat, 1-2)

After that, Omar ﷺ began to lower his tone so much when in the presence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that at times even the Prophet ﷺ would have trouble making out what he was saying, feeling the need to ask him to repeat his words.[569]

Other Companions, too, were engrossed in a feeling of respect for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. They would do all they could just to make sure the Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not feel uncomfortable. In fact, after the above Revelation, a Companion known for his naturally loud tone forced himself to remain indoors for days, afraid at the time that his tone of voice would cause discomfort upon the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

569. Bukhari, Tafsir, 49/1.

The Prophet ﷺ afforded him personal consolation and only after that did he feel the confidence to come out.[570]

When sitting with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ around the same meal, the Companions would never reach out their hands to the food before him.[571] They used to knock on the door of his chamber with the tips of their fingernails and refrain from all kinds of behavior that had the slightest chance of causing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ discomfort.[572] They were equally delicate in describing him, depicting him as either the sun or the moon, out of love and respect.[573] Their sensitivity extended to narrating the *ahadith* of the Prophet ﷺ. Upon narrating a *hadith*, their expressions would visibly change, with sweat flowing freely from their foreheads, tears welling up in their eyes and the veins in their necks noticeably swelling up from anxiety.[574] When they would hear a loud noise, like for instance the sound of a hammer banging against a nail or a stake coming from the houses around the *Masjid*, they would instantly send out a message, telling the person to stop disturbing the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Some would even have their doors made outside of Medina, just to avoid falling into a compromising situation.

Kaab ibn Zuhayr was previously among the poets who had openly declared war on Islam. A death sentence was placed on his head, owing to the spiteful satirical poems he had recited. To talk some sense into him, his brother Bujayr, a Muslim, sent him a poem, as an advice that he was facing a bitter end unless he cleaned up his act. Tremendously distressed, with the help of a Companion, Kaab then turned up next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and pledged allegiance, without, however, giving away his identity. He sat on his knees and said:

"Messenger of Allah…Kaab ibn Zuhayr also wants to come to your presence and seek amnesty by accepting Islam. Do you accept him?"

When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ agreed, Kaab joyously exclaimed, "I am Kaab, Messenger of Allah!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 152; Hakim, III, 675/6480; Haythami, IX, 393)

As a show of gratitude to the Prophet's ﷺ kindness in forgiving him, Kaab then began to recite the *qasidah* of *Banat Suade* had had prepared from beforehand. In appreciation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then removed his mantle from his back and personally put it on Kaab's back. The *qasidah* has thus come to be known as *Qasidat'ul-Burdah*; *burdah* being mantle in Arabic.

570. Abu Dawud, Atimah, 15/3766.
571. Bukhari, *Adabu'l-Mufrad,* p.316; Haythami, VIII, 40.
572. Muslim, Fadail, 109.
573. Ibn Saad, III, 156; Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 38; Dârimî, Muqaddimah, 28.
574. Kastallânî, II, 386.

After his death, the mantle presented to Kaab was purchased by Muawiyah ؓ. What is preserved today at Topkapı Palace in the *Hırka-i Saâdet* chamber which carries the same name (*Hırka* means mantle in Turkish) is this very mantle, passed on from one dynasty and generation to another.

There is another *qasidah* famously known as *Qasidat'ul-Burdah*, which belongs to Imam Busiri.[575] The correct name of this second *qasidah* however is *Qasida-i Bur'a*. *Bur'a*, in Arabic, means to recover from an illness. Imam Busiri especially gave his *qasidah* this title in commemoration of his recovery from paralysis. The story goes as follows:

Imam Busiri had become hemiplegic, that is half his body had become paralyzed. So he wrote the *Qasidal-i Bur'a* and asked the Almighty to be cured. The night he completed the *qasidah*, he saw a dream, where he read to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ what he had written; and happy to hear the poem, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stroked the part of his body that was paralyzed. Seeing that not a remnant of his paralysis remained after he woke up, Imam Busiri offered his thanks to Allah, glory unto Him. When walking to the mosque for *fajr* salat that morning, he came upon the great man of insight, Sheikh Abu'r-Raja, who asked to him to recite the *qasidah* in which he praises the Best of Creation ﷺ.

"I have many poems like that. Which one are you asking for?" inquired Imam Busiri.

"The one you read to the Messenger of Allah last night", said Sheikh Abu'r-Raja. "I saw him to be in much delight as you were reading it."

Astonished, Imam Busiri wondered, "How could you know about that dream when I have not told anyone about it?"

"I was there, too", replied Sheikh Abu'r-Raja, after which he proceeded to read the first couplet:

Is it the people of Salam[576] you recall, my heart,

That you mix blood to the tears flowing from your eyes?

It has been narrated that as the *qasidah* was being read in his presence, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was smiling and gently swaying his body from enjoyment, like the elegant quiver of leaves.

575. From Egypt, Muhammad ibn Saîd al-Bûsirî, lived in the 13th during the Mamluk era. (608/1211-694/1296) (H. İbrâhim Şener, *Kasîde-i Bürde Kasîde-i Bür'e ve Su Kasîdesi,* p. 32, 60)

576. *Salam* is the name of a grove where the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to talk to his Companions from time to time.

Compliant with a certain method, the *qasidah* has continued to be read to the ill ever since, in hope of the manifestation of the Prophet's ﷺ spirituality, and has been used as a means thereof to seek a cure from Allah, glory unto Him.[577]

Ascertain the Truth of the News Brought by the Wicked!

Walid ibn Uqbah, sent by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Banu Mustaliq to collect their alms, turned away upon seeing a crowd of their tribesmen coming towards him to welcome him, assuming instead they were out to kill him, owing to a quarrel between them dating back to the days of Ignorance. Returning to Medina, he gave a false account to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ of what had happened, going to the extent of even slandering Banu Mustaliq to absolve himself.

"They have turned away from Islam, Messenger of Allah!" he said. "Not only did they refuse to pay their alms, their nearly killed me!"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ immediately prepared a military unit to send to what seemed to be a rebellious tribe. Becoming aware of the situation before that however, Banu Mustaliq urgently sent the envoy that had gone out to welcome Walid, to Medina. There, they were met with the Muslim cavalry unit assigned to them. The truth behind the confusion was soon exposed. Allah, glory unto Him, thereupon sent a Revelation warning Believers not to pass judgment until getting to the bottom of a given matter:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ

"O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly and afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done. And know that among you is Allah's Messenger; should he obey you in many a matter, you would surely fall into distress, but Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it seemly in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you unbelief and transgression and disobedience; these it is that are the followers of a right way." (al-Hujurat, 6-7)

577. İlhan Armutçuoğlu, *Kasîde-i Bürde,* Konya 1983, p.8-11.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then ordered Abbad ibn Bishr ؓ to "…return with them and collect their alms; but avoid choosing the best of their goods!" Abbad ؓ stayed with Banu Mustaliq for ten days, during which he taught them what he could of the Quran and Islam. (Ahmad, IV, 279; Ibn Hisham, III, 340-341; Ibn Saad, II, 161)

Many a news coming from an evil-doer travels from mouth to mouth and ultimately reaches an upright yet naive person, who although has no business with evil deeds, then proceeds, with good intention, to spread the rumor to others. It must be made loud and clear that taking unverified news for truth and spreading them incurs liability, regardless of whether the one spreading it is an evil-doer or not. Perhaps there might not be any harm if it turns out there is truth behind the news but on the other hand, if it turns out that the news is fabricated after all, then spreading it would directly smear one with great sins like slander and backbiting. Therefore, one always ought to be wary of news, especially those of unpleasant import that come from dubious sources.

The Tabuk Campaign: An Enormous Test of Iman (Rajab, 9 / September-October, 630)

The Campaign to Tabuk, a town lying right in the middle of Medina and Damascus, was the last undertaken by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. The Campaign can be considered a sequel of the Battle of Muta. The Emperor of Byzantine, still rattled from Muta, was of the intention to invade entire Arabia before Muslim power reached threatening heights. For the purpose of quelling what he saw as the Muslim onslaught, he wanted to use the Christian Arabs. The Ghassanids, who he saw as natural candidates for this, were more than ready for such a mission. The news of the potential attack was soon brought to Medina by the incoming trade caravans, warning them their towns were soon to facing an ominous attack.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then rallied all the Companions together, young and old. Preparations for any given campaign until then were always conducted secretly, in order for the enemy not to become aware of the destination. But now the situation was different. It was the hottest days of summer. They were facing a strong enemy and a great distance. Moreover, Muslims were in a financially tight situation, strained by the devastating famine that had struck Medina that year.[578]

Hypocrites, making the most of the troubles as usual, rekindled their undying flames of mischief and attempted to demoralize the Believers. Their chief Abdullah ibn Ubay, arrogant as usual, began to drivel, "Does Muhammad think the Romans are child's play? I can see him fall captive with his Companions from now!"

578. Ibn Saad, II, 165; Bukhari, Tafsir, 66/2.

Following suit, other hypocrites were making remarks like, "How could you set out on a campaign in such hot weather?" The response to that came through a Revelation:

فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلَافَ رَسُولِ اللهِ وَكَرِهُوا
أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا
فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَّوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ

"Those who were left behind were glad on account of their sitting behind Allah's Messenger and they were averse from striving in Allah's way with their property and their persons, and said: Do not go forth in the heat. Say: The fire of hell is much severe in heat. Would that they understood it?" (at-Tawba, 81)

Some desert Arabs, on the other hand, came to the Prophet ﷺ, and submitting made-up excuses, asked to be exempted from participating in the Campaign; as is recounted by the below *ayah*:

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا
اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

"And the defaulters from among the dwellers of the desert came that permission may be given to them and they sat (at home) who lied to Allah and His Messenger; a painful chastisement shall afflict those of them who disbelieved." (at-Tawbah, 90)[579]

The Quran subsequently laid down clear criteria to separate the Believers from hypocrites:

لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعُدَتْ
عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللهِ لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ
يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

"Had it been a near advantage and a short journey, they would certainly have followed you, but the tedious journey was too long for them; and they swear by Allah: If we had been able, we would certainly have gone forth with you; they cause

579. Waqidi, III, 993-996; Ibn Saad, II, 165.

their own souls to perish, and Allah knows that they are most surely liars." (at-Tawbah, 42)

لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ

"They do not ask leave of you who believe in Allah and the latter day (to stay away) from striving hard with their property and their persons, and Allah knows those who guard (against evil). They only ask leave of you who do not believe in Allah and the latter day and their hearts are in doubt, so in their doubt do they waver." (at-Tawbah, 44-45)

The hypocrites had made no preparation for the campaign whatsoever. This clearly showed they had no intention of joining the Believers on the march to Tabuk. So the Almighty declared:

وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً

"If they had intended to come out, they would certainly have made some preparation…" (at-Tawbah, 46)

Yet it was a Divine blessing that the hypocrites were intentionally lagging behind and keeping a low profile not to join the Muslim army. Even if they did, Abdullah ibn Ubayy would have in fact repeated an attitude similar to which he had displayed during the Battle of Uhud and desert the Believers. Allah, glory unto Him, states:

وَلَكِنْ كَرِهَ اللهُ انْبِعَاثَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ
لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَّا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا خَبَالًا ولَأَوْضَعُوا خِلَالَكُمْ يَبْغُونَكُمُ
الْفِتْنَةَ وَفِيكُمْ سَمَّاعُونَ لَهُمْ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

"…but Allah was averse to their being sent forth; so He made them lag behind, and they were told, "Sit ye among those who sit (inactive). If they had come out with you, they would not have added to your (strength) but only (made for) disorder, hurrying to and fro in your midst and sowing sedition among you, and there would

have been some among you who would have listened to them. But Allah knoweth well those who do wrong." (at-Tawbah, 46-47)

Although the hypocrites were already mischievous and disobedient, this was still nothing in comparison to the harm they caused during the campaigns in which they had somehow taken part, disrupting the entire Muslim army with their rumors, lies and endless bouts of fear and anxiety. Each hypocrite was simply trouble waiting to break lose. The Almighty intervened, however, and prevented the hypocrites from joining the Tabuk Campaign; a campaign whose many hardships seemed just too daunting for them. The Companions were ultimately relieved from their usual trouble making.

Making up excuses, the hypocrites were asking to be exempted from the Campaign. Some took this far enough to even claim they were withholding themselves from joining from fear they might be tempted by Greek women. They were trying to hide their sinister hypocrisies by appearing to have deeper concerns. But Allah, glory unto Him, exposed them yet again:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ ائْذَنْ لِّى وَلَا تَفْتِنِّى أَلَا فِى الْفِتْنَةِ
سَقَطُوا وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

'And among them there is he who says: Allow me and do not tempt me. Surely into temptation have they already tumbled down, and most surely hell encompasses the unbelievers." (at-Tawbah, 49)

Threatening the hypocrites with a bitter punishment awaiting them, the Almighty was at the same time warning some of the Believers, who under their influence, were showing signs of slackness:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمُ انْفِرُوا فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ اثَّاقَلْتُمْ
إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرَضِيتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
فِى الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ إِلَّا تَنْفِرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ
قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا وَاللهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"O you who believe! What (excuse) have you that when it is said to you: Go forth in Allah's way, you should incline heavily to earth; are you contented with this world's life instead of the hereafter? But the provision of this world's life compared with the hereafter is but little. If you do not go forth, He will chastise you with a

painful chastisement and bring in your place a people other than you, and you will do Him no harm; and Allah has power over all things." (at-Tawbah, 38-39)

اِنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ
فِى سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

"Go forth light and heavy, and strive hard in Allah's way with your property and your persons; this is better for you, if you know." (at-Tawbah, 41)

The warnings had an instant effect on the Muslims, revitalizing them in a blink. The slackness that had doomed upon hearts now made way for remorse, which turned into a lively and enthusiastic initiative. A mobilization of *iman*, packed with vigor, had now gotten under way. After all, it was a *fard'ul-ayn*, a categorical obligation upon all Muslims to heed the call of *jihad* where the enemy was getting prepared to raid Muslim lands. Still, those who could justifiably be considered exempt from the call for *jihad* were again classified by Divine Revelation:

لَّيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ
حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"It shall be no crime in the weak, nor in the sick, nor in those who do not find what they should spend (to stay behind), so long as they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger; there is no way (to blame) against the doers of good; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (at-Tawbah, 91)

In line with the declaration of the *ayah*, those who are exempt from joining the battle, in remaining back, are not to cause mischief in their town or spread false, demoralizing rumors and are to run to the aid of the families of those who are taking part in battle; and given they are 'doers of good', can be sure to incur neither blame nor sin. At the same time, since there is no declaration prohibiting them from joining the cause, if they wish and have the means to do so, they are free to join the army on the condition that they do not be a burden on the rest.

The Companions were now caught in the midst of a whirlpool of excitement, anticipating to sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. Seven underprivileged Companions, however, could not find a mount to take part in the journey. In any case, the Companions were overall forced to share one camel and sometimes even three among each other. But these seven could not even find a mount they could at least share with two or three others, despite their desperation to join. So they came to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to inform him of their dilemma. But

when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ told them he had no camels to offer them, they broke down in tears and returned weeping. The Divine appreciation of the tears shed in the noblest of ways was pronounced in the Quran:

وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوا وَّأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ

"…Nor in those who when they came to you that you might carry them, you said: I cannot find that on which to carry you; they went back while their eyes overflowed with tears on account of grief for not finding that which they should spend." (at-Tawbah, 92)

As Abdurrahman ibn Kaab and Abdullah ibn Mughaffal ﷺ, among those praised in the *ayah*, were returning from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ with teary eyes, Ibn Yamin approached them and asked the reason why they were weeping.

"We went to the Messenger of Allah as a last resort so he could arrange a mount for us", they said. "But he could not find one either…and we have no mount to join the Messenger of Allah in his cause."

Ibn Yamin ﷺ then provided a mount for both to share and some dates as provision. Likewise, Abbas ﷺ provided mounts for the other two and Othman ﷺ for the remaining three.[580] The Noble Prophet ﷺ was later able to provide mounts for other needy Companions.[581] These Companions, who despite being exempt from joining the Campaign could not bear to be away from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ even for a moment and whose hearts were filled with the love of Allah, glory unto Him, were thus granted the honor of setting out to Tabuk, in return for their fervent enthusiasm and desire to join.

This is just one of numerous examples that shows just how great a physical and spiritual sacrifice the Companions showed in the way of the Almighty and indicates the excellence of their inner composition.

Another moving memory from Tabuk is recounted by Wasilah ibn Asqa ﷺ:

"Days before setting out to Tabuk, I made an announcement in Medina, looking for someone who could have me ride on his mount in return for my share of spoils. An old *Ansari* man told me he could take me to the battle by taking turns with me to ride on his mount. 'It is a deal' I immediately said, and he responded by saying, 'Then we shall advance in the name of Allah's abundance!'

580. Ibn Hisham, IV, 172; Waqidi, III, 994.
581. Bukhari, Maghazi, 78.

I thus departed Medina with a perfect friend for the road. In the end, Allah granted me a share of spoils in the form of some camels. I steered them to my *Ansari* friend, for him to take.

'Take your camels and go!' he, however, said.

'But these are yours according to our earlier agreement', I insisted.

'Brother', then said the *Ansari*, 'take your spoils for I never wanted your material share in the first place. I only intended to have a share of your rewards in the Hereafter.'" (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 113/2676)

Excitement over turning lives and wealth into resources for the Hereafter and thereby purchasing Paradise was lived at its maximum during the preparations for the Campaign, providing scenes setting a standard for the entire *ummah* to come until the Final Hour. In rushing to serve the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Companions were like moths around a flame, repeating the words 'May our parents and lives be sacrificed for you Messenger of Allah' with every tremendous feat they carried out, indicating it meant nothing for them in comparison for their love of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

The excitement endured with the Companions for years to come. Preferring *taqwa* over the grant given to those mentioned as justifiably exempt in the above *ayah*, the blind Ibn Umm Maqtum took active part in the Battle of Qadisiyyah, even acting as a flagbearer of the Muslim army, in spite of his blindness.

The warnings revealed by the Almighty had the effect of mobilizing a superb Muslim army of over thirty-thousand men in a short amount of time.[582] The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had at first given the flag of Najjar to Umarah ibn Hazm ؓ; yet seeing Zayd ibn Thabit ؓ, he decided to take it off Umarah's hands and give it to Zayd instead.

"Are you angry with me, Messenger of Allah?" then inquired Umarah ؓ.

"No, by Allah, I am not angry with you at all!" replied the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. "But you should prefer the Quran, too. He has committed more of the Quran to his memory than you. One who has more of the Quran in his memory is always to be preferred, even if he be a black slave with a slashed nose!"

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ then advised Aws and Khazraj to give their flags to persons who had more of the Quran memorized than others. Abu Zayd ؓ was thus given the flag of Awf, while Muadh ؓ the flag of Banu Salimah. (Waqidi, III, 1003)

582. Waqidi, III, 1002; Ibn Saad, II, 166.

Rallying to Donate

Prior to setting out on the Campaign, the Noble Messenger ﷺ rallied the Companions to donate to cover the many needs of the army. Medina, at the time, was under the grip of a severe famine. Regardless, setting aside all personal thoughts and motives amid a supreme effort of *iman*, the Companions keenly embarked upon a race of altruism. Abu Bakr ؓ presented his entire wealth. When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "I have not benefited from anyone's wealth as much as I have benefited from Abu Bakr's", Abu Bakr ؓ, already reduced to tears by then, said, "Are not my wealth and I for you alone, Messenger of Allah?" (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 11). This was a confirmation that he had devoted his entire existence to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and had become annihilated in him.

"What have you left for your wife and kids, Abu Bakr?" asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to which the Companion again replied, with ecstatic *iman*, "Allah and His Messenger!" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3675)

Omar ؓ had brought half his wealth, thinking at least this time he might surpass Abu Bakr ؓ in donation. But he again fell short.

Othman ؓ prepared three-hundred camels, fully equipped, and donated them to the army, together with a thousand dinars. Regarding him, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stated the following words of loving compliment, "Nothing Othman will do shall harm him anymore!" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 18/3700; Ahmad, V, 63)

In addition, Othman ؓ and his family donated the entire jewelry they had in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. Likewise, all the female Companions brought whatever they had of jewelry and ornaments and put them in front of the Noble Messenger ﷺ.[583] An eleven year old girl, unable to remove her earrings, ripped them out from her ears from sheer enthusiasm and placed the bloodied earrings in front of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Even the underprivileged Companions, who barely had anything to donate, were caught up in the excitement of wanting to donate something. One of them was Abu Aqil ؓ, who working all night, made two scales of dates, one of which he took home and the other which he donated to the Muslim army. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "May Allah prosper what you have brought and what you have kept", then ordered the dates be added to the rest of the pile of donations. (Tabari, Tafsir, X, 251)

The hypocrites, on the other hand, began mocking what they perceived as petty donations, charging Abu Aqil with insincerity. Uqbah ibn Amir ؓ says the following:

583. Waqidi, III, 992.

"Once the *ayah* for charity[584] was revealed, we began carrying wood on our backs and donating from what we earned. Then came a man who gave away a great amount, about whom the hypocrites remarked, 'He is showing off'. There came another, who gave a measure of dates, about whom the hypocrites again said, 'Allah stands in no need of his single measure of dates.' Thereupon it was revealed:

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

'They who taunt those of the faithful who give their alms freely, and those who give to the extent of their earnings and scoff at them; Allah will pay them back their scoffing, and they shall have a painful chastisement.' (at-Tawbah, 79)" (Bukhari, Zakat, 10; Muslim, Zakat, 72)

From what is understood from the alternative versions of the above narration, the man who donated a great amount was Abdurrahman ibn Awf ﷺ, while it was Abu Aqil ﷺ who brought the single measure of dates.

Ulbah ibn Zayd ﷺ, another from among the poorer Companions, woke up after a certain time into the night, offered salat and then prayed, "Allah…You command and encourage for *jihad*. Yet you have not given me power over a single mount on which I can set out in Your way with the Messenger of Allah! You have not even placed a mount in Your Messenger's hands on which I can set out! I have always given the charity I have been obliged to give, from my wealth and body. Allah…And now I have only a single piece of item, which you have bestowed upon me, to give… and that I shall offer!"

In the morning, he came next to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and said, "I have nothing with me, Messenger of Allah, that I can give away as charity except for this single item! Let me say that I bear no grudge from now against those who might speak ill of me or mock me in regard!"

To these words laden with as much compassion as love, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ simply replied, "May Allah accept your charity!" and nothing else. The next day he told Ulbah, "I took your charity and glad tidings to you! By in Allah, in whose Hand of Might the life of Muhammad resides, you have been recorded in the book of those

584. The relevant ayah is the 103rd of at-Tawbah, most of which was revealed with regard to the Ca - paign of Tabuk:

خُذْ مِنْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ اِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them; surely your prayer is a relief to them; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing."

whose charities have been accepted!" (Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, II, 500; Ibn Kathir, as-Sirah, IV, 9; Waqidi, III, 994)

Some hypocrites were still striving to influence Muslims, weak of *iman*, and hold them back from taking part in the Campaign. They had taken the house of a Jew by the name of Suhaylim as base. Upon becoming informed, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ sent Talha ؓ and a few other Companions and had the house burnt down. The hypocrites were hence forced to disperse, their courage too shattered to engage in a similar mischief again.[585]

On the other side, Believers whose hearts were besieged by the fright of Divine wrath from the cautionary Revelations over their former slackness, had now joined the Campaign in all their entirety, to the extent of leaving Medina to look like ghost town with their departure. There was still the possibility that the Campaign would last longer than expected and any turmoil that may have broken out in the capital could have meant that the State would struggle to keep itself together. Similarly, huge losses in the battlefront could have meant the weakening of Islam in the short run. The perishing of knowledgeable persons, needed to form the driving force of intelligence behind Muslims, could have resulted in the collapse of the State, among other severe consequences. To prevent this right from the beginning, Allah, glory unto Him, declared a standard concerning participation in battle:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَآفَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ
لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِى الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

"Nor should the Believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them,- that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)." (at-Tawbah, 122)

Compliant with this command, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ left Ali and Maslamah ؓ in Medina, to ensure the maintenance of security behind the front.

as-Saat'ul-Usrah: The Time of Difficulty

Finally, in spite of the difficult conditions and hardships, the Muslim army was able to make its move, in great splendor. Still, the Believers had to continue to endure ensuing troubles and keep their patience. The difficulty of the conditions had not yet subsided. Among the aggravating circumstances were:

1) An uncompromising drought.

585. Ibn Hisham, IV, 171.

2) The great distance to be travelled, a path stretching across a desert unsuited for walking.

3) Season of harvest, with which the Campaign coincided; fruits waiting to be reaped.

4) Scorching heat.

5) The longstanding belief in the might of the Byzantines based on the sheer numbers they could field on the day.

Owing to the troubles involved, the Campaign has in fact been dubbed *al-Ghazwat'ul-Usrah*, literally the Battle of Trouble, and the days corresponding to the Campaign *as-Saat'u-Usrah*, the Time of Trouble.

Briefly after the Muslim army made its move, Ali ﷺ came bolting and caught upto to them to ask the Blessed Prophet ﷺ permission to join the cause. "The hypocrites", he said, "are spreading rumors that you left me behind because you are not fond of me, Messenger of Allah! Please allow me to join!"

"They speak lies, Ali!" responded the Prophet of Allah. 'I have assigned you as deputy over those whom I have left behind. Return immediately! Be an eye and ear for both your family and mine; be my deputy over them! Will not you settle for being like Harun to Musa (on his way to Mount Sina)? With one difference, that after me shall come no prophet!" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 174; Bukhari, Maghazi, 78; Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 31) After being on the receiving end of these wonderful praises, Ali ﷺ returned contentedly to once again assume his duty.

The Army had now traveled a considerable distance. Abu Dharr ﷺ caught up with the Army after some time. His weak and frail mount was unable to endure the strain of the journey, for which reason he had fallen behind from the main group. He finally had to abandon his mount, and despite of the gruesome difficulty, caught up with the army on foot. Seeing him, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ smiled as he stated, "May Allah have mercy on Abu Dharr! He lives alone, shall die alone and shall be resurrected alone!"

The miraculous words of the Noble Messenger ﷺ came true in the life of Abu Dharr ﷺ, as he ended living and breathing his last all on his own. (Waqidi, III, 1000)

The journey was proving to be excruciatingly difficult. The heat was stifling. Another difficulty lied in the fact that three Companions had to take turns riding one camel between them. Two people were splitting a single date into two, to share. Finding water was almost impossible. When taking *wudu*, each part of the body was therefore washed only once. Travelers (*safari*) were ordered to wipe their *mas'h*

with their palms for three days, compared to residents (*muqim*)[586]. At one stage, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ prayed, which resulted in a downpour only where the Muslim army was stationed.[587]

As the Army was passing through the ancient town of Hijr, where the Thamud people, incurring the wrath of Allah, glory unto Him, were destroyed, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said to the Companions, "This is a valley wherefrom one ought to flee!" (Waqidi, III, 1008) After that he added, "Enter the land of those who have wronged themselves with tears in your eyes, lest what struck them should strike you, too!" Then covering his head, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ quickly passed through the area. Bottles filled with water obtained from there, he had them emptied; and despite his sensitivity with regard to not wasting anything, he had the doughs prepared with the very same water, thrown away. (Bukhari, Anbiya, 17; Tafsir, 15/2; Muslim, Zuhd, 39)

Places struck with the wrath of Allah, glory unto Him, carry its doom until the Final Hour. To avoid being subject to the negative spiritual reflection mirrored from such areas that have come under Divine wrath, places immersed in rebellion and sin, it is imperative to move through these areas quickly, as has been stated by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.[588]

One night as they were in the vicinity of Hijr, the Blessed Prophet said, "There will break out a fierce storm tonight! Tie your camels fast, remain seated where you are and do not get up!" A gale indeed ravaged through that night. One who got up to take *wudu* was struck to the ground, while another, gone out to search for his camel, was blown towards the nearby Mount Tay. (Bukhari, Zakat, 54; Muslim, Fadail, 11)

Within a days distance away from Tabuk, the Muslim army was again clutched by the grip of an intense thirst. Muadh ibn Jabal ﷺ recounts:

586. Ibn Majah, Taharat, 45; Ahmad, VI, 27.

587. Ibn Hisham, IV, 177.

588. An example of how circumstances reflect onto and affect matter goes as follows:
In a research conducted on frozen water crystals, Masaru Emoto, a Japanese scientist, discovered that the crystals developed in natural ponds remote from human intervention, were made up of perfectly elegant hexagons with spellbindingly flawless shapes. Taking some of this water into two separate bowls, he carried out an experiment. The crystals of the first bowl, to which positive expressions of love, mercy, gratitude and prayer were whispered, maintained their natural, graceful shape, whereas the crystals of the second bowl, to which negative expressions like insults and the word 'devil' were whispered soon disintegrated entirely and lost all their aesthetic traits. During the same experiment, it was found that both bowls of water reacted differently to pleasant and revolting music. To reinforce the result he reached, Emoto conducted another experiment; this time on two separate jars of boiled rice. Inside the first jar, he placed a small piece of paper inscribed with the words 'thank you', and in the second, another piece of paper with the word 'stupid' on it. Repeating, moreover, each word to their respective jar, Emoto found that after a month, the rice inside the first jar retained its freshness and color, while those of the second turned black and began to emit a foul smell. (Safvet Senih, "Su Kristallerinin Sırrı", *Sızıntı,* Aralık 2002, number 287; M. Akif Deniz, *İlk Adım*, Şubat, 2003)

"The Messenger of Allah said to us, 'Allah willing, you will reach the spring of Tabuk tomorrow!' A day later, we reached the spring. We collected the little water there was with the palm of our hands into a leather bottle. The Messenger of Allah washed his hands and face with it, then sprinkled the remainder back onto the spring. He then thrusted into the spring three sticks, each with an iron spike. Three springs of water then immediately begun jetting forth. All the warriors quenched their thirsts. The Messenger of Allah then said to me, 'If you live long enough, Muadh, you will have seen this area filled with gardens and vineyards, before long!'" (Muslim, Fadail, 10; Ahmad, V, 238)

Experiencing enormous hunger during the Campaign, the Companions asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to give them permission to slaughter their camels, so they could obtain their tallow. They were given a go-ahead. Then Omar ﷺ commented, "If you give them permission to slaughter their camels, Messenger of Allah, then there will be a shortage of mounts. If you wish, you could instead ask them to bring what they have of provisions and then pray Allah to grant abundance upon them. We shall certainly hope Allah will grant it."

"Very well, we shall do that", said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Shortly thereafter, he had a leather cloth brought and had it spread out on the ground. After, he ordered the soldiers to bring whatever provisions they had. Some brought a handful of corn, others the same amount of dates while others came with pieces of bread. There was very little food piled on the cloth. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then prayed to Allah, glory unto Him, for the food to be granted abundance, after which he told the Companions to "…bring your containers and take your food!" The soldiers brought their containers and filled them copiously. There was not a single container left unfilled. They then ate to their hearts content, even seeing plenty of food left over afterwards. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then said, 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that I am His Messenger. One who is not united with Allah with unwavering belief in His Unity and the prophethood of Muhammad will certainly be held back from entering Paradise!" (Muslim, Iman, 45)

The Muslim army had now encamped at Tabuk; yet there was not the least sign of the enemy. Met, this time around, by an enormous Muslim Army, the confidence of Christian Arabs was completely shaken; and remembering the heroics of the three-thousand warriors of *iman* at Mutah, they decided to withdraw from fighting altogether. Besides, the Byzantines had long changed their minds about invading Arabia and the Emperor was too busy trying to suppress internal turmoil at Humus. More was exposed not long after. It turned out that the news of the imminent Byzantine invasion of Arabia was an exaggerated rumor spun by the Ghassanid Arabs.

The Muslims and of course Islam gained an enormous prestige by virtue of having courageously marched to Tabuk. The northern borders of Arabia were secured. The King of Ayla, the people of Jarba and Azruh and the Jews of Makna came under Muslim protection by agreeing to pay *jizyah* to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. With four-hundred and twenty cavalrymen, Khalid ibn Walid ؓ conducted a raid on Dumat'ul-Jandal, took the Christian King Uqaydir ibn Abdulmalik prisoner and brought him to the Noble Messenger ﷺ. He, too, was released on the condition of paying *jizyah*. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 180-182; Ibn Saad, I, 276-277; Ahmad, V, 425)

The Muslim army remained in Tabuk for twenty days. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ did not wish to advance any further, as he had no desire to deliver Islam to people with the force of the sword. Besides, the Byzantines were intimidated enough as it was and no enemy had dared to confront them. A deadly and highly contagious plague was moreover devastating Syria at the time, for which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stated, "When you hear about a plague in a certain place, do not enter there! If you are there, do not leave!" (Bukhari, Tibb, 30)

After consulting the Companions, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ decided on leading the Believers back to Medina.

Another Companion, Abu Haythamah ؓ, had caught up with the Muslim army at Tabuk. The difficulty of the Campaign had at first forced him to remain back in Medina. One day, his wife called him to a delightful feast she prepared under a pergola in his garden. When Abu Haythamah saw the exquisite feast, he instantly felt a chill down his spine. Picturing the hardships the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Companions were almost certainly going through at that very moment, he murmured to himself, "How could I be doing this when they are enduring all this torment in the way of Allah?" Sunk in remorse, without laying a hand on the feast prepared for him, Abu Haythamah immediately left Medina and eventually made it next to the Muslim army at Tabuk. Happy to see him, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "Abu Haythamah… You were nearly destroyed!" He then prayed for his forgiveness. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 174; Waqidi, III, 998)

Allah, glory unto Him, does not compel His servants to duties beyond their capacities; only those things within their power does He hold them responsible with. What Abu Haythamah ؓ did was, in this respect, paying the price of for the capacity of endurance he had been endowed with.

Such incidents are like living advices for us, means to reflect on and measure just how much we are able to put our spiritual and physical capacities to the service the Almighty and contemplate the responsibilities that come with being a Muslim.

One morning at Tabuk, leaning against a date tree, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave the following talk:

"The best of people is he who on horseback, camelback or on foot, sets out on *jihad* in the way of Allah until death. The worst of people is the evil-doer and the impudent who reads the Book of Allah but does not benefit from it.

Know that the truest of words is the Book of Allah. The strongest handle to seize is *taqwa*. The best of religions is that of Ibrahim عليه السلام (Islam). The best of laws is the Sunnah of Muhammad. The most honorable of words is the remembrance of Allah. The most beautiful of narratives are those of the Quran.[589] The best of deeds are the obligatories demanded by Allah. The worst deeds are innovations. The best way is the way of the Prophet. The most honorable of deaths is martyrdom.

The worst kind of blindness is to stray off the right path after having found it. That which is less but enough is better than that which is more and keeps one engaged, holding him back from worshipping Allah. The worst apology is that made once death shows its face. The worst remorse is that felt in the Hereafter. The worst of people is he who arrives the last at Friday Salat and speaks of Allah in a bad way. The person with the most faults is he whose tongue spins the most lies.

The best richness is the richness of the heart. The best provisions are the provisions of *taqwa*. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Allah. Poems without wisdom are of the deeds of *Iblis*. Alcohol is the uniter of sins of all kinds. Sinful women are the traps of the devil. Youth is a division of madness. Usury is the worst of earnings. The worst thing to feed on is the property of an orphan. A happy person is he who takes a lesson from the condition of others.

Each of you shall go four *arshin* (nine feet) under; and the accounts of your deeds will be deferred to the Hereafter. What matters with deeds, are their consequences. The worst of thoughts are those that are deceitful. Swearing at a Believer is a sin, killing him is disbelief. To backbite a Believer is to rebel against the commands of Allah.

589. More than a third of the Quran consists of narratives. In emphasizing their importance, Allah, glory unto Him, commands to contemplate the truths they communicate, derive the proper lesson and assess these lessons with out own conditions. The Quran states:

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَآ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ

"We narrate to you the best of narratives, by Our revealing to you this Quran, though before this you were certainly one of those who did not know." (Yusuf, 3)

فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"...therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect." (al-Araf, 176)

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِى هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

"And certainly We have set forth to men in this Quran similitudes of every sort that they may mind. " (az-Zumar, 27)

He who commits perjury shall be denied. He who seeks forgiveness shall be forgiven by Allah. Whoever suppresses his anger, Allah shall reward him. He who endures his loss shall be compensated by Allah. Allah will increase many times more the reward of he who endures hardship. He who rebels against Allah shall be beset with torment.

O my Lord! Forgive me and my *ummah*!

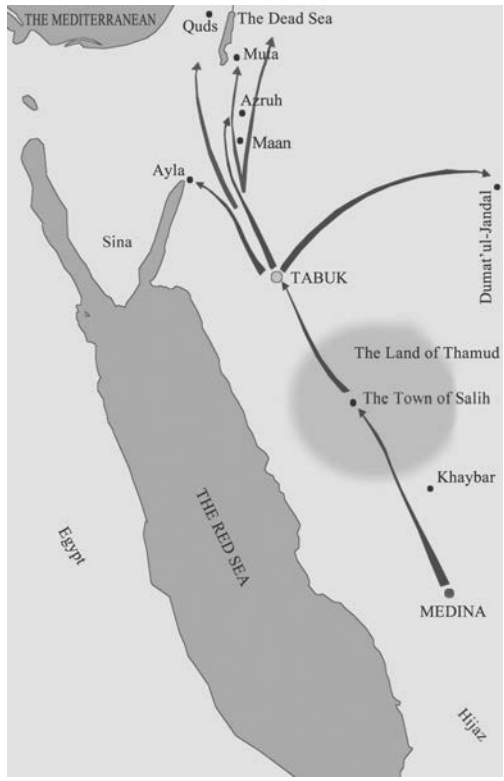
O my Lord! Forgive me and my *ummah*!

O my Lord! Forgive me and my *ummah*!

I seek forgiveness from Allah on your behalf and mine!" (Waqidi, III, 1016-1017; Ahmad, III, 37; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, V, 13-14)

The Martyr of Tabuk

Only a single Companion was martyred at Tabuk: Abdullah al-Muzani ﷺ, who became honored with Islam despite being in a tribe of idolaters. His father had left no wealth behind when he died, so Abdullah was brought up next to his wealthy uncle, who reared him and made him a wealthy man like himself. In spite of having an avid desire to become Muslim as early as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ made the Hegira to Medina, Abdullah could not follow through because of his uncle, a practicing idolater. Once the Prophet of Allah ﷺ returned to Medina following the *fath* of Mecca, Abdullah said to his uncle, "I have waited all this time for you to become Muslim. But I still do not see you nurture any desire towards Muhammad. But the least you can do is to allow me to become a Muslim!"



"If you begin to follow Muhammad in any way", replied his uncle, "I will take away everything I have given you, all the way to the clothes on your back!"

"By Allah, I have begun to follow Muhammad. I have already stopped worshipping stones and wood! So you can go ahead and take whatever you wish from my hands", he responded.

His uncle took everything away from him to the very clothes on his back, like he had threatened. Abdullah ﷺ returned to his mother, nearly bare. She divided a thick rug into two pieces. Abdullah ﷺ used half of it to cover his upper body, the other half for his lower body. He was resolute; he wanted to go to Medina as soon as possible and unite with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. All the obstacles put in front of him now counted for nothing. He could not wait a single moment more. Getting away from his tribesmen who were keeping him under close watch, he secretly left in the dark of night. After a long and tiring journey, he finally arrived within a visible distance from Medina, albeit his hands and feet were bloodied, scarred from the strain of the long walk and he had all but lost his breath from thirst and hunger. His excitement was still overflowing; he just wanted to get there. Then all of a sudden he stopped and thought to himself that there was no way he could appear in the presence of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ with the coarse rugs he had haphazardly strung around himself for clothes. Yet without any other choice, he kept walking, and the young, soon-to-be Companion made it to the *Masjid* amid the fascinated gazes of those catching a glimpse of the stranger enshrouded in rug. He slept there until dawn. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then lead the Companions in *fajr* salat. Afterward, just as he was surveying those present at the salat right before retreating into his chamber, he noticed Abdullah. The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, the refuge of the lonely and the weak, then embraced Abdullah with all his compassion. Finding out his name was Abduluzza, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said:

"You are Abdullah *Dhul-Bijadayn* (the one with two rugs)! Remain somewhere close to me and visit me frequently!" Abdullah ﷺ then joined the people of *Suffa*, where he immediately begun learning to read the Quran. Soon, he was able to read and memorize many *suwar*.

The celebrated Companion, who bound himself to the Prophet ﷺ with love, was soon running with him from one battle to another, burning with the desire to be martyred to surrender his life in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. He adamantly insisted the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to pray that be would be martyred prior to setting out on the Campaign of Tabuk. The Noble Messenger ﷺ prayed, "O my Lord! Make his blood inviolable to the nonbelievers!"

"That is not what I had wanted, Messenger of Allah", said Abdullah ﷺ, to which the Prophet ﷺ replied, "If you go out to fight in the way of Allah, contract a fever and die, you are a martyr! If your mount throws you off, you fall and break your neck, you are a martyr! Not to worry! Whichever one of these it may be, it shall suffice for you to be a martyr!"

Miraculously, Abdullah ﷺ ended up becoming martyred in the exact manner foretold by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. One night, as the army was preparing to head back, three people were carrying away the body of a deceased Companion under the dim light of a flame; they were Blessed Prophet ﷺ and two of his closest Companions, Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ. The body belonged to Abdullah *Dhul-Bijadayn* ﷺ.

Abdullah ibn Masud ﷺ recounts, in awe, the scene he witnessed:

"In the dark of night, I saw a moving flame at the corner of the field where the warriors had set up their tents. I got up and followed it. Lo and behold; it turned out to be the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ carrying the body of Abdullah *Dhul-Bijadayn* ﷺ. They came to a spot, where they stopped and dug a grave. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then went down into the grave, as Abu Bakr and Omar ﷺ were preparing to pass the body to him.

'Bring your brother closer to me', said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They did. Taking hold of his body, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ then placed him with his own hands in the grave, after which he stood and prayed, 'O my Lord! I was pleased with him; I always was…Be pleased with him too!'

I was very much moved by what I saw. I was envious of *Dhul-Bijadayn*. I thought to myself there and then, 'If only it was me placed in the grave right now amid the Prophet's compliments!'" (Ibn Hisham, IV, 183; Waqidi, III, 1013-1014; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, III, 227)

The Betrayal of the Hypocrites and *Masjid'ud-Dirar*

A group of hypocrites plotted to assassinate the Blessed Prophet ﷺ just as the army was passing through a narrow strait, at night, on the return from Tabuk. Informed of their sinister plan, the Noble Prophet ﷺ sent Huzayfa'tul-Yaman to them and the hypocrites took flight hearing the Companion shout out towards them. (Ahmad, V, 453)

There was yet another trap set by the hypocrites awaiting the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Abu Amir Fasiq, a Christian of Khazraj stock, who had left Medina with the establishment of Islam and defected to the Byzantines, was incessantly provoking the hypocrites to take action. As the boiling point of this witch's cauldron, they built a mosque a little further down from the Masjid of Quba. This was the famous Masjid of Dirar.

To execute yet another of their assassination plans they invited the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to their mosque prior to the Campaign of Tabuk. "On the return, *inshallah*", was the Prophet's ﷺ reply. They were now on the prowl for the return of the Muslim army.

The Believers were now within a short distance from Medina, as Jibril ﷺ came and gave the Blessed Prophet ﷺ insight into this center of mischief paraded as a mosque of piety. The trap set up by hypocrites in the form of a rival mosque to ensnare the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and the entire Believers, was thus thwarted before it could ever be put into practice. The Almighty exposed their malice in no uncertain manner:

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ
حَارَبَ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفَنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَى وَاللهُ يَشْهَدُ
إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَّمَسْجِدٌ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ
يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَّهِّرِينَ

"And those who built a masjid to cause harm and for unbelief and to cause disunion among the believers and an ambush to him who made war against Allah and His Messenger before; and they will certainly swear: We did not desire aught but good; and Allah bears witness that they are most surely liars. Never stand in it; certainly a masjid founded on piety from the very first day is more deserving that you should stand in it; in it are men who love that they should be purified; and Allah loves those who purify themselves." (at-Tawbah, 107-108)

This time, it was more than a usual case of hypocritical duplicity; they had conspired a blatant plot against the Prophet ﷺ and the Believers. They therefore needed to be unmasked and their mosque had to be torn down.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ acted in accordance with Divine command and had the Masjid of Dirar burnt down upon his return to Medina. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 185)

From the Minor *Jihad* to the Major

Tabuk, the final military campaign which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ personally led, was a campaign of hardships. The Muslim army had crossed a distance of a thousand kilometers just to reach Tabuk and had covered the same distance to return. With dust covering their unkempt hairs and beards, the Companions had virtually been reduced to skin and bone. Still, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ told them, "We are now returning from the minor *jihad* to the major!"

The Companions were astounded. "Look at us, Messenger of Allah. Could there ever be a greater *jihad* than this?" they wondered.

"We are now returning to the major *jihad*", repeated the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "the *jihad* against the *nafs* (ego)." (Suyuti, II, 73)

The jihad against the ego is the spiritual training of the heart, carrying the aim of refining one spiritually, by virtue of elevating his moral conduct, and turning the person into a perfect human being (*insan-i kamil*). The way leading to this lies in a reason enmeshed in Divine truths, a heart adorned with *iman* and beautiful morals, an overall state crowned with the spirituality of the Quran and Sunnah, and perfection through reaching the ascension of *tawhid* by virtue of upright behavior.

The entire Muslims in Medina, young and old, flocked to *Saniyyat'ul-Wada* to welcome the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Companions as they made a triumphant return to Medina.[590]

The Repentant Three

There were three groups of males who did not participate in the Tabuk Campaign. They were:

1) Those with legitimate excuses who, as declared by the *ayah*, could not join because of a lack of means, despite desperately wanting to. About them, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions, "There are such people in Medina that there is not a single valley we tread without them being with us! It is only their (justified) excuses that have left them behind." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 81; Muslim, Imarah, 159)

In another *hadith*, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ indeed declares, "Deeds are according to intentions…" (Bukhari, Bad'ul-Wahy, 1)

2) The hypocrites. Together with many other excuses, their main reason for staying behind was their conviction that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would not in any way return from Tabuk. But seeing the Prophet ﷺ return safe and sound, over and above the other successes attained during the Campaign, they straightaway rushed to him, and making up lies for excuse, apologized. These hypocrites, around eighty in number, became subject to Divine Revelation:

وَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّٰهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنْكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَفْرَقُونَ لَوْ يَجِدُونَ
مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَغَارَاتٍ أَوْ مُدَّخَلًا لَّوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ يَجْمَحُونَ

"And they swear by Allah that they are most surely of you, and they are not of you, but they are a people who are afraid (of you). If they could find a refuge or cave

590. Bukhari, Jihad, 196.

or a place to enter into, they would certainly have turned thereto, running away in all haste." (at-Tawbah, 56-57)

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ نَبَّأَنَا اللهُ مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ وَسَيَرَى اللهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَى عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

"They will excuse themselves to you when you go back to them. Say: Urge no excuse, by no means will we believe you; indeed Allah has informed us of matters relating to you; and now Allah and His Messenger will see your doings, then you shall be brought back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of what you did. They will swear to you by Allah when you return to them so that you may turn aside from them; so do turn aside from them; surely they are unclean and their abode is hell; a recompense for what they earned." (at-Tawbah, 94-95)

With these revelations, the hypocrites were effectively banished from Muslim society. Labeled as 'unclean', they were no longer considered to be Muslims. They were also banned from taking part in all causes in the name of Islam.

3) Those without any excuses not to join. They stood under two groups:

a) Those who did not take part in the Campaign, despite not being hypocrites and not having any legitimate excuses. Yet, before the Prophet of Allah ﷺ returned from the Campaign, they realized their error and became deeply remorseful. As self-punishment, they tied themselves to the posts of the *Masjid* and vowed to remain in that state until the Blessed Prophet ﷺ came and personally untied them. The Noble Messenger ﷺ was told of these men upon return, regarding which he stated, "And I promise not to untie them until I receive an according command." Revealed thereupon was the below *ayah*:

وَآخَرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا عَسَى اللهُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"And others have confessed their faults, they have mingled a good deed and an evil one; may be Allah will turn to them (mercifully); surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (at-Tawbah, 102) The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then proceeded to untie the Companions who had tied themselves to posts out of remorse.

b) Those who, again, had not joined the Campaign despite neither being hypocrites nor having legitimate excuses to fall back on, yet who remained separate from the others who had tied themselves to the posts of the *Masjid*. They were three in number: poet Kaab ibn Malik, Murarah ibn Rabi and Hilal ibn Umayya. Unlike the hypocrites, they did not lie but instead confessed to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that they had no justified excuse for not joining the cause. With an inexpressibly profound remorse over their failure to join, they pleaded the Prophet of Allah ﷺ for forgiveness.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, incredibly sensitive to abide by Divine commands, did not immediately forgive the three. Furthermore, as he was waiting for a Revelation that would disclose their fate, he did not even speak to them. The Companions, who regulated their behavior in line with the Prophet's ﷺ at all times, did the same.

The three Companions had taken part in all the previous battles; except for Kaab ﷺ, who was absent only at Badr. The world had suddenly narrowed in their eyes, constricting their hearts, now that they were ignored by the entire Muslim society because of their misjudgment in remaining behind from Tabuk. Worst of all was the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had shunned them to a point where he did not even respond to their greetings. The entire earth had become estranged; even their wives were like strangers. There was nothing they could do about it, except for weep, day and night. They were like melted candles from their incessant crying. They had done a mistake but that did not distance them from being sincere, upright; neither did it shake their trust in Allah, glory unto Him, nor did it divert them away from remorse and repentance. Fifty days had gone by when they were finally rewarded for their honesty and genuine repentance in the form of the below *ayat*:

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلِّفُوا حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَّا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

"And to the three who were left behind, until the earth became narrow to them notwithstanding its spaciousness and their souls were also straitened to them; and they knew it for certain that there was no refuge from Allah but in Him; then He turned to them (mercifully) that they might turn (to Him); surely Allah is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah and be with the true ones." (at-Tawbah, 118-119)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave the good news to Kaab ibn Malik ﷺ with the words, "I give you the glad tidings of your happiest day since the day you were born!"[591]

591. As Kaab ﷺ rushed towards the Blessed Prophet ﷺ upon receiving this wonderful news, he was

"Then, Messenger of Allah", said Kaab ibn Malik ﷺ to express his gratitude, "I want to give away my entire wealth as charity for the sake of Allah and His Messenger!"

"Better you hold on to a portion of your wealth", advised the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

"In that case, I will hang on to my share from Khaybar", said Kaab ﷺ, before adding, "It was only because of my honesty that Allah saved me from this plight. So, Messenger of Allah, I shall speak nothing but the truth for the rest of my life!"

Kaab ﷺ says:

"By Allah, the greatest gift Allah the Almighty gave me after I was honored with the acceptance of Islam was to allow me to speak the truth in the presence of the Messenger of Allah and thereby save myself from being among the others who perished. For Allah the Almighty said the harshest words about those who made up excuses and remained behind from Tabuk, declaring:

فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ

'…so do turn aside from them; surely they are unclean!'" (at-Tawbah, 95) (Bukhari, Maghazi, 79, Wasaya, 16, Jihad, 103; Muslim, Tawbah, 53; Musafirin, 74)

The three Companions were beset with a punishment of such immense calibre for having stayed back just from one campaign, in spite of having been by the side of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in virtually all the previous battles. The incident serves as a great precaution for those who, without a legitimate excuse, remain on the outer in the struggle of *tawhid* in the way of Allah, glory unto Him.

What an enormous lesson there indeed is that a man should carry the appellation of a 'Companion' and come face to face with death at numerous battles, first and foremost at Badr, and then become subject to the heaviest censure for being absent in an arduous yet bloodless campaign like Tabuk! Not only is there an incredible lesson in this for those with a thread of understanding, the incident also carries terrifying meaning and consequence. Considering that struggling for the triumph of Islam is a must in this day and age, as it has been at all times, how sad it is to see the many neglectful, slow and lax to move in this regard. If a veteran of Badr is made to pay such a heavy price for neglect, we must stop and think the consequences of neglect for people like us; and compliant with the command of the Almighty, strive to be with the righteous.

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intercepted by Talha ibn Ubaydullah ﷺ, who gleefully embraced Kaab and congratulated him; a genuine expression of feeling Kaab ﷺ fondly remembered for the rest of his life.

In order for them to be receptive to positive influences and to shun the negative, Allah, glory unto Him, has commanded Believers to be in the company of the righteous; to be with them, to seek their closeness, to support them and not to remain distant from them in all aspects of their life. This is imperative to prevent 'the earth from becoming narrow', to mend the aching heart and to thereby salvage oneself from the punishment of the Almighty and remove all barriers standing in the way of attaining His pleasure. How beautifully the importance of befriending the righteous is expressed in the below couplet:

A thorn is destroyed when alone,
Yet watered when with the rose…

It is quite momentous that this command was revealed during Tabuk, the 'Troublesome Campaign'. It is necessary to be with the righteous, not only in times of comfort, but also when they are enduring hardships, when they have set out on *jihad* in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. Bearing the troubles the righteous suffer, emulating them in their efforts without remaining back is absolutely essential.

Surah Tawbah, most of which concerns the Tabuk Campaign, places great emphasis on the importance of physical and spiritual *jihad* in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. Physical and spiritual *jihad*, after all, serves as the most glaring proof of a Muslim's loyalty to the religion and at the same time sets the difference between a Believer and a hypocrite. The Almighty declares:

إِنَّ اللهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِى التَّوْرَاةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِى بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

"Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the garden; they fight in Allah's way, so they slay and are slain; a promise which is binding on Him in the Taurat and the Injeel and the Quran; and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Rejoice therefore in the pledge which you have made; and that is the mighty achievement." (at-Tawbah, 111)

Another implication of this is that, at all ages, the hypocrites pose the greatest threat to Muslims, something brought to clear daylight by Surah Tawbah and the experiences of Tabuk.

To Allah Belongs the Treasures of Heaven and Earth

In spite of all attempts by the nonbelievers, Allah, glory unto Him, had now reigned His Religion supreme and rendered the Believers victorious. This was, all along, a Divine promise given to the Prophet ﷺ and those who followed his lead with sincerity. This truth was therefore always bound to be realized regardless of the ill-wishes its enemies. So declares the Quran:

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُّوا وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

"They are the ones who say, 'Spend nothing on those who are with Allah's Messenger, to the end that they may disperse (and quit Medina).' But to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth; but the Hypocrites understand not." (al-Munafiqun, 7)

To be sure, centuries of persistent efforts by nonbelievers to weaken the economical strength of Muslims has invariably been frustrated by Allah, glory unto Him, who has countered that by endowing His Believers with numerous blessings, as it is to Him alone the treasures of the heavens and earth belong. Mobilizing His physical and spiritual armies, the Almighty has always granted Believers with swift victories at the expense of nonbelievers, who have been subjected to overwhelming defeats.

History provides many instances of Muslims gaining supreme victories with small numbers with the help of Allah, glory unto Him. Badr, Muta, the battles of Andalus and Malazgirt are prominent examples among numerous others. It was only four-hundred cavaliers that founded the magnificent Ottoman State, which left a signature of the import of *i'la-yi kalimatullah*, fighting to reign the word of Allah supreme, on the entire world.

That shows that Muslim success is always parallel with and dependent upon their *ikhlas*, that is sincerity to Allah, glory unto Him. Loss of *ikhlas* is loss of strength; clutching onto *ikhlas* brings invincibility. When that is the case, enemies of Islam will in the end always be frustrated no matter how much they try to harm Muslims. Allah, glory unto Him, talks of this protection in the Quran:

وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ

"…But if you are constant and do right, not the least harm will their cunning do to you; for Allah encompasses round about all that they do." (Al-i Imran, 120)

Muslim history has stood witness to countless manifestations of this *ayah*.

No Benefit in being Muslim without Worship

As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ returned to Medina having accomplished the set goals, Urwah bin Masud, the leader of Taif, hastily arrived in town to declare his acceptance of Islam. Without further ado, he then returned to his hometown of Taif and began inviting the locals to Islam. But having years ago stoned the Prophet of Allah ﷺ who had done naught but invite them to the Truth, the locals reacted even more brutally against Urwah ؓ. Showering him in arrows, they martyred him.[592]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then commanded Malik ؓ, the chieftain of Hawazin who was reinstated in his leadership after becoming Muslim, to subdue Taif. Malik's ؓ persistent raids on the town wore the Thaqif down, forcing them to remain trapped in their forts. Perturbed, they sent their notables to Medina.[593]

To warm their hearts to Islam, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ hosted the Thaqif delegate inside the Masjid.[594] That way, they got to hear the Quran the Companions recited at night and during *tahajjud* salat, as well as seeing Muslims line up, shoulder to shoulder, for the five daily salats.[595]

Eventually, the Thaqif delegate said they were ready to become Muslim on the condition they were exempted from salat.

"There is no benefit in religion without *ruqu* (salat)", was the Prophet's ﷺ response. (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 25-26/3026)

Thaqif were then foolish enough to demand that he allow Lat, their venerated idol, to remain in its place for another three years. When their request was declined, they further vied for a period of another month for the idol to remain. Of course, this, too, was denied. Then helpless, they became Muslim. Then they asked to be exempt from at least demolishing Lat themselves. The Noble Prophet ﷺ did not insist and sent Abu Sufyan and Mughirah ؓ to execute the task instead.[596] Strange enough, as the idol fell to the ground, the women of Thaqif ran out on to the streets of Taif and began mourning. But it would not be long before they would completely forget even the names of their former idols and become sincere Muslims, appreciative of the excellence of Islam.

592. Ibn Hisham, IV, 194; Hâkim, III, 713/6579.
593. Ibn Hisham, IV, 138, 195.
594. Ahmad, IV, 218.
595. Waqidi, III, 965.
596. Ibn Hisham, IV, 197; Waqidi, III, 967-968.

The compassionate prayer the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had made in the ninth year of the Meccan era for the guidance of the people of Taif, despite their vicious treatment of him, had now truly become realized.

The Thaqif delegate was taught the obligatories of Islam and the rules they needed to know for the daily routines of worship. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ also told them to fast in the remaining days of the month of Ramadan in which they happened to be at the time. Bilal Habashi ؓ would deliver their *sahur* and *iftar* meals, to begin and end their fasts, throughout their stay in Medina.[597]

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ would meet with the delegates that came to see him whenever he was available, day or night, and give them lengthy advices about their issues.[598] Likewise, he met regularly with the Thaqif envoy after *isha* salat. Once, as they stood talking for a lot longer than usual, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ even felt the need to put the weight of his body on one leg and rest the other.[599]

Aws ibn Huzayfah ؓ, a member of the then Thaqif delegate, recounts:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ arrived later than usual, at one time, after *isha* salat. 'What was it that kept you, Messenger of Allah?' we asked when he turned up.

'I have made it personal duty to read a *hizb* of Quran a day. I did not want to come until I completed that', the Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied.

Come morning, we asked the Companions how they read the Quran in *hizb*. They explained, 'We make the first three *surah* the first *hizb*, then the following five the second *hizb*, then in order, we join the next seven *surah*, then the next nine, then the next eleven and then the next thirteen and make one *hizb* of each. And we then begin with Surah Qaf and make a final *hizb* until the end. We thereby read the Quran in seven *hizb*.'" (Ahmad, IV, 9; Ibn Majah, Salat, 178)

Being a declaration from Allah, glory unto Him and a trust bequeathed by the Prophet ﷺ, the Companions used to place great importance on the Holy Quran. Not only would they recite it lengthily during salats, they would also be sure to recite it extensively during journeys, battles and at night. They were never able to get enough of the zest of reciting the Quran; not a single day would pass without them reciting the Holy Book.[600] They used to begin their days with the Quran and would advise anyone suffering from an illness of the eye to stare at the pages of Quran. Othman

597. Waqidi, III, 968.
598. Omar ؓ states, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Bakr used to discuss a given issue concerning the Muslims until the late hours of night; and I used to be by their side." (Tirmizî, Salât, 12/169)
599. Abu Dawud, Shahr-u Ramadan, 9/1393.
600. Ibn Saad, III, 75-76.

ﷺ is even reported to have worn out both his copies of the Quran from excessive reciting.[601]

The most enthusiastic about the Quran among the representatives of Thaqif was Othman ibn Abi'l-As. Way before the other delegate members and without them knowing, he had pledged allegiance to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and become Muslim. Because he was their youngest, he was left behind to keep an eye out on the mounts. As the others would return to him in the midday heat to take a nap, Othman ﷺ would go next to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and ask him questions on various matters, listen to and learn the Quran. He was thereby able to hear and memorize some *surah* directly from the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. If he found the Prophet of Allah ﷺ to be busy, then he would either go to Abu Bakr or Ubay ibn Kaab ﷺ and ask them what he had in mind or read to them what he had memorized. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was much fond of Othman's ﷺ enthusiasm and took a special liking towards him. When the Thaqif delegate expressed their desire to return to Taif, they asked the Noble Messenger ﷺ to designate a leader from among themselves. The Prophet ﷺ designated Othman ﷺ, even though he was their youngest. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 185; Ibn Saad, V, 508; Ahmad, IV, 218)

Other Events Following Tabuk

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had a son named Ibrahim born from the Egyptian Mariyah ﷺ. The little Ibrahim fell ill after the Prophet's ﷺ return from Tabuk and passed away a short while later. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was much grieved. Silent yet compassionate tears trickled from his eyes. He then said, "The eye cries, the heart grieves, but we do not say any word other than that which pleases our Lord! By Allah, Ibrahim, we are much grieved by your separation!" (Bukhari, Janaiz, 44; Ibn Saad, I, 138)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then asked for a stone to be brought, which he then placed at the head of the grave. Ibrahim's عليه السلام grave was now marked out. It was first his grave to be sprinkled with water.[602]

A solar eclipse took place on the same day. Some Companions, referring to a custom from the Age of Ignorance, explained the eclipse with Ibrahim's عليه السلام passing away. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ, on the other hand, offered two *rakah*s of salat as the eclipse was taking place and to indicate he did not condone the thoughts held by some Companions, stated, "The sun and the moon are two signs from among the signs of Allah. They are eclipsed neither by anyone's death nor by anyone's life.

601. Kattânî, II, 197.
602. Ibn Saad, I, 144; Ibn Abdilbarr, I, 59.

When you see their eclipse, engage in the remembrance of Allah and offer salat!"[603] (Nasai, Kusuf, 14)

In the month of Rajab the Abyssinian Negus passed away. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave the news of his death to his Companions instantly, on the day, despite of the sea and the distance separating the two lands.

"Offer the funeral salat of your brother", he said, "who has passed away in a distant land!"

"Who is he, Messenger of Allah?" asked the Companions, to which the Noble Messenger ﷺ replied, "Negus Ashama…Today, Ashama, the righteous servant of Allah, died. Ask forgiveness from Allah on your brother's behalf!" He then led the Companions in the funeral salat of the bereaved Negus. (Muslim, Janaiz, 62-68; Ahmad, III, 319; IV, 7)

News soon arrived in Medina, confirming that the Negus had passed away on the exact day told by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Umm Khulthum ؓ, the honorable daughter of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the wife of Othman ؓ, also passed away, in Shaban, the following month.[604]

Two months after the Campaign of Tabuk, the month of Dhil-qadah saw the mischief and malice ridden life of Abdullah ibn Ubay, the leader of the hypocrites, finally come to an end. His death shook the foundations of the hypocritical movement in Medina. A majority of hypocrites afterwards repented and ended up becoming genuine Muslims.

Ibn Ubay's son Abdullah came to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ immediately after his father's death and passing on to the Prophet ﷺ his father's will, said, "Abdullah ibn Ubayy is now dead, Messenger of Allah. I ask for your shirt as his shroud, for you to lead his funeral salat and pray for his forgiveness!"

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ removed his shirt of his back and gave it to Abdullah ؓ and after the corpse had been prepared, offered his funeral salat. This, however, brought about the below Revelation:

603. Festivities observed in some regions during both the solar and lunar eclipses are superstitions that have nothing to do with Islam, which instead enjoins the offering of salat and prayer simultaneous to the two events. Considering the sound of an owl bad luck and shedding tears stems, again, from a similar superstitious beliefs.

604. Ibn Saad, VIII, 38.

وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ
عَلَى قَبْرِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

"And never offer prayer for any one of them who dies and do not stand by his grave; surely they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger and they shall die in transgression." (at-Tawbah, 84) (Bukhari, Janaiz, 23; Ibn Majah, Janaiz, 31)

Upon being asked as to why he agreed to hand his shirt over to enshroud the corpse of a notorious hypocrite and offer his funeral salat, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ explained, "Neither my shirt nor the salat I pray for him will protect him from the punishment that comes from Allah's way. Yet by doing so, I anticipate the guidance of a thousand of his people!"

Indeed, witnessing the Prophet's ﷺ approach, a thousand former hypocrites of Khazraj, did leave their ways of old for good and became Muslim.[605]

The Year of Envoys

Mecca had been taken, the Battle of Hunayn had been won, the people of Taif had become Muslim a year after the siege and the troublesome campaign of Tabuk recently undertaken had been concluded triumphantly. There was no longer any obstacle in the entire Arabian Peninsula that could stand in the way of Islam. Tribes in Arabia, who thereby enjoyed the opportunity of gaining a more intimate knowledge of Islam, began sending envoys to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to pledge their allegiance. These envoys, arriving from Yemen, Hadramawt, Bahrain, Amman, the borders of Syria and Persia, were either coming to become Muslim in the presence of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ or to inform him they had already done so, and to ask from the Prophet of Allah ﷺ teachers who could teach them Islam.

A brilliant example of a tribe to immediately return to their people to convey what they had personally learned from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is Banu Tujib. A thirteen man envoy of the tribe arrived next to the Noble Messenger ﷺ, with their alms to pay. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ became fond of their overall manner and after warmly welcoming them, told Bilal Habashi ﷺ to host them in the best way possible.

"We have brought to you, Messenger of Allah, what is Allah's due in our wealth!"

"Take them back with you and distribute it among your poor", said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

605. Aynî, VIII, 54; Diyarbakrî, II, 140-141.

"But we have only brought with us what was left over from our poor", they explained.

Abu Bakr ؓ then praised them, commenting, "Surely there is not any other envoy among other Arabs like these men of Tujib, Messenger of Allah!"

"Guidance is in the hands of Allah", then stated the Noble Prophet ﷺ. "Allah opens to *iman* the hearts of whom He wishes for the best."

The envoy of Banu Tajib asked the Blessed Prophet ﷺ certain questions about the Quran and Sunnah. Their answers were written down and handed to them. Their enthusiasm increased the Prophet's ﷺ interest towards them. After staying a few days, the envoy expressed their desire to return. When asked as to why they were in such a hurry, they said, "We want to return to our people as soon as possible so we can teach them what we saw and learnt of the Messenger of Allah!" They saw the Prophet of Allah ﷺ one last time and bode him farewell. The Prophet ﷺ sent Bilal Habashi ؓ with them and granted them more gifts than any other envoy. (Ibn Saad, I, 323; Ibn Qayyim, III, 650-651)

Requiring the incoming envoys to stay in Medina for a certain period of time, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereby made sure they learnt the Quran and the basics of Islam, giving them a grasp of the religion in practice by having them see how he himself applied its principles. For instance, when an envoy from the Abd'ul-Qays tribe arrived, he asked the *Ansar* to host them and see to their needs while they were in Medina, meanwhile telling them to teach their guests the basics of Islam and have them memmorize enough chapters of the Quran for them to be able to offer their salat. The next morning at *fajr* salat, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ then asked how they were doing and whether they were happy with how their hosts had been attending to them. Seeing they were more than pleased, he then distributed them, in pairs, among the Companions, to give them an opportunity to learn Islam more sufficiently and comfortably. Satisfied with the efforts of his Companions and the eagerness of the Abd'ul-Qays envoy, he then attended to each of the new Muslims, one by one, and personally listened to them recite what they had commited to memory and corrected their mistakes, if they had any.[606]

In this way, Islam spread across entire Arabia and grew by the day. People were arriving in masses to enter Islam and Medina was filled to capacity, each day, with new guests. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ was welcoming them in the most compassionate manner, treating them with honor and kindness, conversing with them in line with their own conditions and dispositions, gathering information about their regions,

606. Ahmad, III, 402.

listening to their needs and solving their problems, and in short, embroidering the pattern of the joy and peace of Islam onto their hearts.[607]

Troubles of old had now cleared the way for a blessing abundant. Allah, glory unto Him, urged His Messenger and the entire Believers, who had born the brunt of years of torment, to show their indebtedness towards this generous blessing He granted them:

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللهِ وَالْفَتْحُ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِى دِينِ اللهِ
أَفْوَاجًا فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

"When there comes the help of Allah and the victory; and you see men entering the religion of Allah in companies. Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness; surely He is oft-returning (to mercy)." (an-Nasr, 1-3)

Owing to the rapid spread of Islam in Arabia and the arrival of envoys of various tribes in Medina in masses to learn the religion of Truth, the ninth year of Hegira has come to be known as the Year of Envoys.

Hajj: The Obligatory Pilgrimage

Hajj was already a continuing practice performed annually according to the Hanif religion of Ibrahim ﷺ, mixed however with many idolater rituals. In the ninth year of Hegira, assigning Abu Bakr ﷺ as *amir*, or leader of the pilgrims, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent a group of three-hundred Companions to Mecca to teach Muslims how to perform their *hajj*, declaring he would personally attend the pilgrimage the following year. He also had the group take twenty-camels, each of them marked, to be sacrificed as part of *hajj*.

As Abu Bakr ﷺ was leading the group out of Medina, the first few *ayat* of *surah* at-Tawbah were revealed, commanding the vicinity of the Sacred House to be purged of idolaters, just as it had recently been purged of idols. Until then, idolaters had been left free to perform their worship in Kaabah. But now, with Kaabah restored with its original identity, the immoral style of idolater worship, consisting of circumambulating naked with a boisterous clap of hands, was no longer befitting of *tawhid*, and was moreover causing uproar among the public. Thus, the *ayat* of at-Tawbah spelled an end to the deeds of disrespect comitted in front of the Sacred House:

607. See, Nasaî, Umrah, 5.

بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدتُّمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللهِ وَأَنَّ اللهَ مُخْزِي الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللهِ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدتُّمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتِمُّوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَى مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

"(This is a declaration of) immunity by Allah and His Messenger towards those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement. So go about in the land for four months and know that you cannot weaken Allah and that Allah will bring disgrace to the unbelievers. And an announcement from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allah and His Messenger are free from liability to the idolaters; therefore if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allah; and announce painful punishment to those who disbelieve. Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfill their agreement to the end of their term; surely Allah loves those who are careful (of their duty)." (at-Tawbah, 1-4)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَـٰذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

"O you who believe! The idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year; and if you fear poverty then Allah will enrich you out of His grace if He please; surely Allah is Knowing Wise." (at-Tawbah, 28)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent Ali ﷺ, behind Abu Bakr ﷺ, to announce the above *ayat* in Mecca. On they first day of *eid*, Ali ﷺ stood near Aqabah and carried out the duty he had been entrusted through a sermon. After reading the *ayah*, he announced the four terms laid down by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ for everyone to hear:

1) Only Believers were to enter Paradise.

2) The idolatrous innovation of circumambulating Kaabah naked was to end and would no longer be tolerated.

3) No *mushriq* was to be allowed in the vicinity of Kaabah from that year onwards.

4) As for the idolaters who had a pact with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ to which they were remaining loyal, the pacts were to stay in force until the end of the designated terms.

No idolater, after that year, was able to come to *hajj*, and it would be the final time Kaabah was circumambulated in the ways of old. Besides, the handful of idolaters that remained came to terms with how degrading a position their beliefs had put them in and finally succumbed to Islam. Just as it had been cleared of idols before, Kaabah was now also purged of idolaters and had become ready for the Great *Hajj* the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was set to attend the following year.[608]

608. Ibn Hisham, IV, 201; Tirmidhi, Hajj, 44/871; Waqidi, III, 1077.

THE TENTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

Adiy ibn Hatim's Acceptance of Islam

Adiy's father was the illustrious Hatim Tai, a man from the Tayy tribe whose generosity had become legendary. Adiy, much like his father, was a generous man of virtue honored among his tribe. He had escaped to Damascus in the ninth year of Hegira, when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sent Ali ﷺ to Tayy to demolish their idol Fuls. Her sister Saffanah on the other hand was brought to Medina among the other captives.

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ set Saffanah free and awarding her clothes, a mount and some provisions for the journey, sent her to Damascus in the company of some trustworthy people.

Adiy ibn Hatim recounts:

"Saffanah was an intelligent woman. 'What do you think of this man?' I asked her. 'I swear', she replied, 'it is best you join him immediately. If he is really a prophet, you beating others in the race to join him will only bring you greater honor and virtue. If he is a king, you will not lose your status in Yemen and be lowered into a despicable position. Now the choice is yours!'

'That is definitely right', I commented. 'I will go to this man. If he is a liar, his lying will not do me any harm. If what he says is true then I shall listen to them and abide by him!' Soon, I arrived in Medina. The moment I saw the Prophet of Allah ﷺ amid his relatives, women and children, I knew he was neither a Ceasar nor a Khosrau! The Messenger of Allah ﷺ took me by the hand to his house. On the way, an old woman stopped him and spoke to him about a certain need. He listened to her lengthily whilst standing and solved her problem. When we arrived at his house, he handed me a cushion filled with date leaves and said, 'Here, sit on this!'

'Please', I said, 'you sit on the cushion!'

'No…You should!' replied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

I ended up sitting on the cushion while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat on the ground. 'This cannot be a deed of a king', I thought to myself.

'Become Muslim, Adiy, and find peace', then said he.

'I already have a religion', was my response.

'I know your religion better than you do', remarked the Prophet ﷺ.

'You know my religion better than I?'

'Sure…Are you not a *Raqusi*?[609] Do you not take a quarter of the spoils seized by your tribe?' he asked.

'Indeed', I responded.

'But this, according to your religion, is not permissible' said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He said nothing more. I felt very embarassed when he said that. 'That is quite true', was all I could say. But since he was sensitive not to dwell on the issue which would have caused me even greater embarrassment, I thought, he must be a prophet sent by the Almighty.

'I know what prevents you from entering Islam', he continued. 'You think to yourself that 'only the weak and those of little worth in the sight of Arabs join him'. Do you know Hirah?'

'I have never been but I have heard.'

'By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my spirit resides, Allah will bring this cause to completion, such that a woman will set out from Hirah and come to circumambulate the House of Allah. Then the treasures of Khosrau Hurmuz shall be conquered!'

'Khosrau Hurmuz?' I asked astonished.

'Yes, Khosrau Hurmuz.'

'Before too long', he continued, 'wealth will abound so much that nobody shall deign to lay hand on it and there will not be found a single person eligible to take one's alms!'

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was extremely happy to see me accept Islam there and then; his face was glowing from satisfaction. He lodged me at the house of an *Ansari* as guest. Thereafter, I began visiting him day and night. Not a single time of salat would arrive without me longing for him!"

Adiy ﷺ, when recounting this memory years later, added:

"By Allah, I saw a women leave Hirah on camelback without any fear and come to Kaabah and perform her pilgrimage! I, too, was among those to seize the treasures of the Khosrau. By Allah, in whose Hand my spirit lies, the third, too, shall undoubtedly take place, for the Messenger of Allah said so!" (Bukhari, Manaqib, 25; Ahmad, IV, 257, 377-379; Ibn Hisham, IV, 246; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, V, 62)

609. The *Raqus* belief consisted of elements borrowed from both Christianity and the Sabean faith.

To be sure, the third piece of news foretold by the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was soon realized. Caliph Omar ibn Abdulaziz had sent his official alms distributor to regions in Africa, after seeing there was nobody in need in other parts of the Muslim realm. But the distributor returned without finding anybody eligible to receive *zakat*. The money was later used to purchase and free a great number of slaves.[610]

The Blessed Prophet's ﷺ First and Last *Hajj*: The Farewell Pilgrimage

The first and last *hajj* attendedby the Blessed Prophet ﷺ after it was decreed obligatory, was the *Hajj'ul-Wada'*, otherwise known as the Farewell Pilgrimage. That the Prophet of Allah ﷺ bade farewell to Muslims during this pilgrimage led to an overall conviction, among the Companions, that it was a sign of his imminent departure, hence the name given to the pilgrimage.[611] The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, on the other hand, used to refer to it as the *Hajjat'ul-Islam*.[612]

All Muslims were invited to attend the pilgrimage corresponding to the tenth year of Hegira, at a time when, with entire Arabia succumbing to the guiding light, Islam was enjoying its zenith of sovereignty and splendor.

Hearts brimming over with the love of Allah, glory unto Him, and His Messenger, heeded this invitation. People flocked from every corner of the peninsula once the news was conveyed outside of Medina. There was no counting the amount of others who joined the masses of people on the way. Throngs of people had covered every distant spot on the horizon. The number of Believers who had rushed to make the most of the opportunity to perform *hajj* with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was around a hundred-and-twenty-thousand. All their hearts were beating as one, forming a sublime scene beyond imagination.

After providing some information on *hajj* and *ihram*, the Noble Messenger ﷺ departed. He took with him around a hundred camels to be sacrificed at pilgrimage. On the way, he spoke to the Believers about various aspects of *hajj*, expanding on what is essential and supererogatory to the deed. Upon reaching Dhul-Hulayfah, in the Aqiq Valley, he said the following to the Companions:

"Jibril, sent by my Lord, came to me at night and said to me, 'Offer salat in this sacred valley and make an intention for both *hajj* and *umrah*.'" (Bukhari, Hajj, 16)

There, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ offered two *rakah*s of salat before enshrouding himself in *ihram*. Glorifying and thanking Allah, glory unto Him, and calling out *takbir*, he then prayed, "O my Lord! Render this for me an accepted and good *hajj* free of insincerity and conceit." (Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 4)

610. See, Bûtî, p.434.
611. Bukhari, Hajj, 132.
612. Haythami, III, 237.

He then enshrouded himself in *ihram* and began calling out *talbiyah*. (Bukhari, Hajj, 23) Afterward, he said, "Whoever wishes to intend on both *hajj* and *umrah*, let him do so!" Once the Prophet ﷺ began repeating the *talbiyah*, he told the Companions that Jibril عليه السلام came to him and said, "Command your Companions to raise their voices while calling out *talbiyah*, for it is among the signs of *hajj*!" (Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 16)

Heaven and earth were buzzing with the sounds of *talbiyah*. Spiritual awareness was weaving its peace, like a web, all around. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ led the Believers in salat where he went. Later on, as a loving gesture of loyalty, *masjids* were built in each of the exact places where he led Muslims in salat.[613]

Upon seeing the Sacred House, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ lifted his hands aloft and prayed, "O my Lord! Increase the honor, majesty, benevolence and grandeur of Your House! Increase also the honor, majesty, benevolence, grandeur and goodness of those who revere it through *hajj* and *umrah*!" (Ibn Saad, II, 173)

With his *rida* flung around his left shoulder from underneath his right, which left his right shoulder bare, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ entered *Masjid'ul-Haram*. He then approached *Hajar'ul-Aswad* and touched it. His eyes were filled with tears. He then kissed the Black Stone; and after placing his hands on it, he rubbed his hands on his face.

"O my Lord! I begin with *iman* in You, affirming Your Book and abiding by the laws of Your prophets", he then prayed, after which he began circumambulating from the corner of the Black Stone. (Haythami, III, 240)

During the first three laps, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ shortened his steps and walked in a quick pace, swinging his shoulders. Each time he came level with *Rukn'ul-Yamani* and *Hajar'ul-Aswad*, he would recite the *ayah*:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِى الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِى الْآخِرَةِ
حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

"And there are some among them who say: Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the fire." (al-Baqara, 201)

After completing this leg of the circumambulation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ again kissed *Hajar'ul-Aswad*, and placing his hands on the Stone, rubbed his face with his hands. Afterward, with some degree of difficulty, he managed to make his way

613. Ibn Saad, II, 173.

through the large crowd of Believers to *Maqam-u Ibrahim*; and taking the *Maqam* between himself and Kaabah, he offered two *rakat* of salat. He then turned, once again, and touched the Black Stone and gave some advice to Omar ﷺ who was standing by. "Omar", he said, "you are a man of strength. Do not inflict harm on the weak by pushing and shoving people to reach *Hajar'ul-Aswad*! Neither be discomfited, nor cause discomfort! If you see that it is vacant around, then touch *Hajar'ul-Aswad* and kiss it. Otherwise make a gesture from a distance and pass through saying *La ilaha ill-Allah* and *Allah'u Akbar*!"[614] (Haythami, III, 241; Ahmad, I, 28)

Then exiting *Masjid'ul-Haram* through the gate of Banu Mahzum, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ went to the Safa Hill. As he approached it, he recited:

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَآئِرِ اللهِ

"Surely the Safa and the Marwa are among the signs appointed by Allah..." (al-Baqara, 158) He then said, "I begin from what Allah mentions first in the *ayah*" and moved closer towards Safa to begin the *sa'y*. Upon seeing Kaabah, he gazed at it and said *La ilaha ill-Allah* and *Allah'u Akbar*. Either three or seven times, he then declared, "There is no god but Allah, who is One, He has no associate or partner. Sovereignty is His, and to Him alone belongs gratitude. He revives and kills…He has power over all affairs. There is no god but Allah. Allah has fulfilled his promise. He has helped His servant and by Himself has routed all the armies that had gathered for hostility." (Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 84)

From Safa, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ then crossed over to the Hill of Marwa on foot. Around the half way mark of his walk he sped up, returning to his moderate walking pace afterwards, praying in the meantime, "O my Lord! Forgive me and have mercy on me! You are the most Glorious, the most Benevolent!" (Haythami, III, 248)

Upon reaching the Hill of Marwa, the Noble Messenger ﷺ repeated what he did on Safa. Going back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times, he thereby completed his *say'*.

614. Even Omar ﷺ used to make a gesture, from a distance, to the Black Stone, fearing he might hurt other pilgrims if he were to get closer. This is something Muslims going to *hajj* today must place a particular emphasis on. A pilgrim ought not to lay waste on the rewards reaped during *hajj* by hurting fellow Believers. In strict compliance with the advice of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, one must totally refrain from pushing and shoving fellow Muslims just to get closer to Kaabah or the Black Stone. It is reported that Omar ﷺ kissed the Black Stone on one occasion and said, "I know you are only a stone; you can neither benefit nor harm. Neither would I have kissed you, had I not seen the Messenger of Allah ﷺ do the same!" (Bukhari, Hajj, 50; Muslim, Hajj, 251) This serves as a proof to the necessity of following the Noble Prophet ﷺ in all behavior, even if one does not reach to the bottom of understanding a given action.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ stayed in Mecca for four days. On the fifth day, the day of *tawriyah*, after completing another circumambulation of Kaabah, he mounted his camel and went to Mina, where he remained until the next sunbreak, offering the salats of *zuhr*, *asr*, *maghrib*, *isha* and *fajr* as they came. In the morning, on the ninth of Dhilhijjah, he made a move towards Arafat, calling out the *talbiyah* throughout.

Following this personal demonstration of how the *hajj* was to be conducted thereafter by his *ummah* and after completing all the duties pertaining to the pilgrimage, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then gave his Farewell Sermon, at Arafat, where the Namirah Masjid stands today:

"People!

Listen to my words with care! Who knows…this year may perhaps be the final time I am here with you!

People!

Just as these days, these months and this town are sacred, so too are your lives, properties and chastity. All forms of violating them are forbidden.

Companions!

Tomorrow, you shall meet your Lord and be surely held to account over all that you do today! Do not relapse into your ways of old and slaughter each other after me! Know that I shall go before you and wait for you by the Pool (of *Kawthar*)! I will exult over your numbers to other nations! Beware not to put me down (by falling into sin)!

Companions!

Whoever has something entrusted with him, let him return it to its owner! All types of usury are abolished; they lay under my foot. But one is required to repay the loan. Neither oppress nor be oppressed! Indulging in usury is now forbidden by the command of Allah. All forms of this vile practice, the legacy of the days of Ignorance, are now under my foot. The first usury I abolish is that of (my uncle) Abbas ibn Abdulmuttalib.

Companions!

Blood feuds sought in the days of Ignorance are, too, entirely abolished. The first blood feud I hereby abolish is that of Rabia, the grandchild of Abdulmuttalib.

People!

Today the devil has forever lost his power of reestablishing his influence and sovereignty over these lands of yours. But he will still be satisfied, should you follow

him in matters you see trivial, apart from what I have abolished. Abstain from those, too, to protect your religion!

People!

Observe the rights of women! Treat them with love and compassion! I advise you to fear Allah in their regard! You have taken women as trusts of Allah; their chastity and honor in the name of Allah! You have rights over women and women have rights over you! The right you have over women is that they should not let anyone tread over your family honor! The right women have over you is that you should provide them, legitimately, their sustenance and clothes. It is not permissible for a woman to give anything of her husband's belongings to anyone, without his permission.

As for your slaves, take care to feed them from what you feed yourselves, and clothe them from what you clothe yourselves. If they do something you cannot forgive, then allow them to leave! But do not ever persecute them; for they, too, are servants of Allah.

Believers!

Hear my words out and learn them well! A Muslim is a brother of Muslim; hence all Muslims are brothers. It is not permissible to violate any given right belonging to your brother of religion, unless he gives it with his hearts content.

Companions!

Do not oppress yourselves! Your selves have rights over you, too!

People!

A culprit is personally culpable for the crime committed. No child may bear the punishment of his father's crime! No father can be held responsible for the crime of his child!

People!

To each rightful, the Almighty has given his due (in the Quran)! An inheritor does not stand in need of a will![615] In whoever's bed a child is born, there is where he belongs. A fornicator is to be deprived. May the base who claims another lineage than that of his fathers or an ingrate slave who alleges to belong to another than his master[616] be inflicted with the wrath of Allah and the curse of the entire angels and

615. Before the *ayah* of legacy that ultimately laid down the rights of the inheritors by spelling out who was to inherit what was left from the deceased, it was obligatory for a Muslim to leave a will. Still, a Muslim is allowed to leave a will regarding a third of his wealth, to which the ruling may not apply.

616. For some notes on slavery, see, p.83***???.

Muslims! Neither does He accept the repentance of such people, nor their integrity and testimony.

People!

Your Lord is One! So is your father; you are all the children of Adem; and Adem is of soil. The most precious of you in the sight of Allah is he who has the most *taqwa* for Him. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, except if it be with *taqwa*.

People!

Time, which continues to revolve, has returned to the phase when Allah created the heavens and earth. A year amounts to twelve months. Four of these are inviolable (*haram*). Three of these are, in order, Dhil-qadah, Dhil-hijjah and Muharram, while the fourth is Rajab (between Jamazi'al-Akhir and Shaban). This year, the inviolable months have returned to their times of old. The *hajj* season has corresponded to the tenth of Dhil-hijjah.

Believers!

I leave you a trust, to which as long as you clutch, you shall never go astray. That trust is the Quran, the Book of Allah.

People!

Worship Allah! Offer the five daily salats! Fast during Ramadan and obey by my commands! You shall then enter Paradise.

People!

Beware of excess! The reason why those before you perished was their excess in religion! Learn from me the rites of *hajj*! I do not know; I may not be able to meet with you again, here, after this year! Let those present deliver my words to those who are not! It could be that the delivered may better understand and protect my words than the deliverer."

Just about then, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ asked the over one-hundred-thousand Companions present, "People…Tomorrow they shall ask you about me; what will you say?"

"We testify that you fulfilled your duty as the Messenger of Allah, warned and advised us", the mass of Believers buzzed.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, following the testimony of the Believers, asked three times, "Have I fulfilled the *tabligh*, my Companions?" He received as many confirmations, after which lifting his hands aloft, he asked for Allah, glory unto Him, to stand witness.

"Bear witness, o Lord! Bear witness, o Lord! Bear witness, o Lord!" (Muslim, Hajj, 147; Abu Dawud, Manasiq, 56; Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 76, 84; Ahmad, V, 30; Ibn Hisham, IV, 275; Hamidullah, al-Wasaiq, p. 360)

The Farewell Sermon is an edict regulating social relations, an abridged account of Islam and, at the same time, a standard for human conduct and rights. Well before the proclamation of the famous Human Rights Declaration, La Fayette, the French philosopher renowned for being one of the masterminds of the French Revolution of 1789, after conducting a meticulous research of just about all the legal systems in the world, finally stumbled upon the Farewell Sermon of the Prophet ﷺ; and seeing it communicate principles of justice for entire humankind, he was forced to admit, "Muhammad the Magnificent…! You have attained to such a towering peak of justice that thus far it has been impossible, and so shall it remain, for anyone to surpass it!"[617]

In the Sermon, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ spells out the rulings that are ought to be known by human beings; ignorance of which could serve as no excuse. The massive crowd there enabled the content of the Sermon to be broadcast to entire humankind.

Following the Farewell Sermon, Bilal Habashi ﷺ called out the *adhan*. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ thereupon led the Believers in the salats of *zuhr* and *asr*, in succession (*jam'*), with a *qamah* before each salat. Then mounting his camel Qaswa, he went to the place of *waqfah* beneath the Jabal'u-Rahmah. He turned Qaswa towards the rocks, to the direction of Kaabah. He stood in *waqfah* until the sun completely set and lost its brightness.

During his *waqfah*, holding the reins of the camel with one hand while lifting aloft the other, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ made a lengthy prayer, an expression of his sensitivity of heart and servanthood; some of which is as follows:

"O my Lord! Thanks to You in the way You have declared and in a way superior to how we express it! Allah…! My salat, worship, life and death are for You alone! To You is my return!

O my Lord! I seek refuge in You from the torment of the grave, the whispers of the heart and scatteredness of concerns! Allah…I seek refuge in You from the disasters brought by the winds!

617. See, Kâmil Mîras, *Tecrîd-i Sarîh Tercemesi,* IX, 289.

O my Lord! Create a light in my eye, a light in my ear and a light in my heart! Allah…Give my chest breadth! Ease my affairs! Allah…I seek refuge in You from the conversion of health into illness, from Your punishment that comes without warning and from all Your wrath! Allah…Guide me to Your right path! Forgive my past and my future!

Allah, who increases ranks, who brings down abundances…Allah who has created the heavens and earth! Passionate voices of many languages rise towards You, making their pleas to You! And my plea is for You to remember me in the land of trial where I stand forlorn by the people of the world!

O my Lord! You hear my words, see where I am and know whatever I have, be it hidden or open! Nothing of my affairs is secret to You! I am helpless and poor; I plea for Your help and mercy! I am afraid; I confess my shortcomings! I ask from You in however manner a helpless person asks from You! I plea to You in however manner a base sinner pleas to you! I pray to You in however manner a servant of Yours, humbled in Your sublime presence, prays to you with tears pouring forth from his eyes, rubbing his face in dirt, who surrenders all his existence for Your sake! My Lord! Do not deprive me of the acceptance of my prayer! Be Compassionate and Merciful towards me…He who is the best of those solicited and the most generous of granters!" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, V, 166-168; Haythami, III, 252; Ibn Qayyim, II, 237)

Below is a part of the prayer made by the righteous predecessors (*salaf'us-salihin*) at Arafat:

"Allah…Who can praise oneself to You? My Lord! My tongue is tied by sins…I have neither a worthy deed which I can use a means for You nor an intercessor apart from my desire! O my Lord…I know I have neither a standing in Your sight due to my sins nor a face with which I can ask for Your forgiveness! O my Lord…Even if I am not worthy of Your forgiveness, still, Your mercy can reach me, for Your mercy is vast enough to encompass everything! O my Lord…No matter how great my faults may be, they are still little compared to Your forgiveness! So my Benevolent Lord, please forgive them for me!

My Lord! If You are to forgive only Your devoted servants, then who shall the wrongdoers seek refuge in? Allah! If You are to have mercy only on Your righteous servants, then who shall the sinners ask help from?

I am in need of You at all times; but You stand in no need of me, ever! You can forgive me only as my Creator! Turn me back from where I stand with all my needs fulfilled, pleas answered and wishes realized!

O my Lord who has power over all the needs of those who ask! My Allah who knows what passes through the minds of those who remain silent! My Allah apart from whom there is no lord to expect help from! My Allah who has no creator

standing above Him to be feared! My Allah who has no vizier we should call on, no doorkeeper we should bribe! My Allah whose generosity only grows the more pleas there are; whose benevolence only expands the more needs there are! O my Lord! You entertain all guests! We, too, are Your guests! Entertain us in Your Paradise!

O my Lord! All visitors are presented with gifts; all who insist are given their awards, while all guests are treated! Each person expecting rewards is duly given! We have all together come to your Sacred House! We have all stood on this great monument! We have all been present in this sacred land! Our hope is to attain to the rewards waiting in Your sublime presence! Do not, Allah, leave our hopes in vain!" (Ghazzali, Ihya, I, 337-338; Bayhaki, Shuab'ul-Iman, II, 25-26)

As the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was still in Arafat, some people from the land of Najd approached him and asked, "What is *hajj*, Messenger of Allah, and how is it completed?"

"*Hajj* is Arafat", replied the Noble Messenger ﷺ. "Whosoever makes it to Arafat before *fajr* salat on the night of Muzdalifah has made it to *hajj*. The days of Mina are three. There is no blame for him, who rushes it, and stays there only for two days; nor is there any blame for him who arrives late." (Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 57)

Today I have Perfected Your Religion

The *ayah* revealed at sunset while the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was standing at *waqfah* declared that Islam had now been completed and perfected:

الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ
أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

"…This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (al-Maida, 3) (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 5/3043)

With his penetrating foresight, Abu Bakr ﷺ understood it all the moment he heard the revelation. He deeply realized just what the 'completed favor' meant and the imminent event to follow after the 'perfecting of the religion.'

For those of foresight, the *ayah* was, in a way, news of the soon passing away of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Allah, glory unto Him, would before long invite His Light of Being ﷺ, His Beloved to the eternal realm. Abu Bakr's ﷺ eyes became soaked with

tears as he wept from the pangs of separation, when there was not a single other person who could feel a glimpse of what the *ayah* was alluding to.[618]

After all, the sacred trust, whose revelation had spanned across twenty three years, was now on the verge of becoming entrusted, as a Divine mercy, with every member of the *ummah* to come until the Final Hour.

After the sun had completely set, the Noble Prophet ﷺ, with Usamah ibn Zayd ﷺ riding behind him on the saddle, made a move from Arafat to Muzdalifah. There, he led the salats of *maghrib* and *isha* in succession (*jam'*); with one *adhan* and a *qamah* prior to each salat. He stayed in Muzdalifah until daybreak and remained in *waqfah* until the full break of morning, calling out *talbiyah* and making prayers throughout.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ collected the stones he was to throw at Mina, from Muzdalifah, commanding his Companions, likewise, to gather the stones to be thrown at *jamrah*.[619] Using his hands, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ demonstrated the proper way to throw the stones, telling the Believers to pick small pebbles and throw them with their two fingers.

Where Wrath Became Manifest

During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ paced through Batn-i Muhassir, lying between Mina and Muzdalifah.

"What was the matter that you sped up, Messenger of Allah?" asked the Companions, astounded.

"It was at that spot", replied the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, "that Allah destroyed Abrahah's army of elephants with the flocks of birds. I sped up to ensure nobody received a share of that wrath." (Nawawi, Sharh-u Muslim, XVIII, 111; Ibn Qayyim, II, 255-256)

In fact there is no *waqfah* in that area during *hajj*.

Manifestations of mercy or wrath may even reflect onto things in the given area. Therefore, one must make the most of places where Divine mercy manifests itself like Kaabah, mosques or the settings of the righteous, and on the contrary, refrain from being present in places reeking with sin and rebellion, manifest with Divine wrath.

618. Elmalılı, III, 1569.

619. A *jamrah* literally means ember, glowing coals or small pebbles. Here it denotes the places where the *jamrah* are thrown during the pilgrimage; a specified amount of pebbles at specified places, namely the major, middle and minor *jamrah*s.

Things, too, are subject to the law of attraction; just like the date log against which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to address the Believers, that, having become saturated with spiritual sentimentality, began to weep once the Prophet of Allah ﷺ started giving his sermons elsewhere.[620] The *ahadith* which provide an account of the incident are *mutawatir*, that is, their narrative authenticity is of certainty.

In relation, Mawlana Rumi says, "Air, earth, water and fire are all servants of Allah and they obey him. They are spiritless towards you and I yet spirited in the presence of Allah."

After moving quickly through the Muhassir Valley, the Noble Messenger ﷺ arrived at the great *jamrah*, that of Aqabah. There, he threw the stones after daybreak on the day of sacrifice. As he commenced throwing the little stones from between his thumb and index fingers, so did the mass of Believers. They began cramming one another however, causing a stampede. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ called out to them. "People…Do not kill each other! When you are to throw stones for the *jamrah*, throw the little ones from between your fingers!"[621] (Ahmad, VI, 379)

Qudamah ibn Abdullah ؓ remembers Blessed Prophet's ﷺ manner during that moment:

"I saw the Messenger of Allah throwing stones on camelback. Neither was he pushing and shoving nor was he telling others to move out of his way!" (Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 66)

After sacrificing, with his own hands, a total of sixty-three camels, one for each year of his life, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ passed the knife to Ali ؓ, who slaughtered the remainder. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ then ordered a piece of meat be taken from each sacrificed camel. They were all placed in a single pot and cooked, from which he and Ali ؓ ate. Later, the Noble Messenger ﷺ asked Ali ؓ to distribute the remaining meat, along with the skins of the sacrificed camels, among the needy.

Thereafter, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ called a barber and had his hair cut. "Women", he said, "do not have their hairs cut; they only have it trimmed", prohibiting women from having their hair cut short. (Darimi, Manasiq, 63)

Anas ibn Malik ؓ narrates:

"After the Messenger of Allah finished stoning the devils, he offered his sacrifice and had his hair cut short. "Women do not cut their hairs short; they only trim

620. Bukhari, Manaqib, 25; Buyû, 32.

621. Unfortunately, the practice of 'stoning the devils' today is far from being performed with a depth of sentiment, with awareness of it being a deed of worship, whereas in effect, it should be offered in a similar state of mind to Ibrahim –upon him peace- when he himself stoned the devil.

it", he then said, prohibiting women from cutting their hair short or shaving their heads. (Darimi, Manasiq, 63)

Another recap of Anas ibn Malik ﷺ is more detailed:

"After stoning the devils, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ slaughtered his sacrifice and had his hair cut. The barber held his lock of hair on the right and cut it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ called Abu Talha and gave him that lock. The barber then held his the hair on his left side. 'Cut', the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him; and he did. He also gave that to Abu Talha, telling him to 'Distribute it among people!'" (Muslim, Hajj, 323-326; Bukhari, Wudu, 33)

As the fringes of the Prophet's ﷺ hair were being cut, Khalid ibn Walid ﷺ insisted he be their recipient. "Please give those to me, Messenger of Allah", he pleaded. "Do not prefer anyone else above me in this regard…may my parents be ransomed for you!"[622] Upon receiving the fringes of the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ hair he desperately wished for, he rubbed them over his eyes and placed them in the front of his cap beneath his *imamah*. Thereafter, he never encountered an enemy force he did not ultimately vanquish. "Wherever I directed them towards", Khalid ﷺ later said, "that place was ultimately taken!"[623] (Waqidi, III, 1108; Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, II, 111)

Prior to the *zuhr* salat on the first day of the *eid'ul-adha*, the Noble Messenger ﷺ mounted his camel and headed towards Kaabah to perform the *ifada* circumam-

622. In the meantime, Abu Bakr ﷺ was looking on in amazement, comparing Khalid's ﷺ deeds at Uhud, Handak and Hudaybiyah to what he had become now. (Ibn Saad, II, 174)

623. Hikmet Atan testifies to a recent, similar instance of the blessings provided through the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ hair and beard:
"In 1983, I heard Ali Yücel Efendi explain the following incident. 'It was during my time as imam at Suluova Central Mosque, when another imam from one of the neighboring villages came to me and said, 'Something just happened of which I could make little sense', he said as he began explaining to me the following.
"Recently, some people from a village close to the village where I am imam came to me with a fair number of books. 'Our father has just passed away', they said, 'and he has left us these. But we cannot read them. You are a scholar; only you can benefit from these books around here. So we thought we would give them you as present'. So I took the books and went home. I then sat in front of the stove, which was burning at full blast, and began to examine the books. Inside them were some letters and enveloped belonging to the deceased imam. They were personal, I thought, and decided to gather them and throw them all into the stove burning ferociously in front of me. But as soon as I did, the stove suddenly went 'tissss' and was put out. Horrified, I ran outside. Only later did I find enough courage to enter back inside the house."
"So I told the *hodja*", continues Ali Efendi, "that there was a strand of the beard of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ inside one of those envelopes".
After a while, I saw the *hodja* once again, who straightaway asked me, "How did you know that there was a strand of the beard of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ inside one of those envelopes? The people that gave the books came again later on and said, 'We were unaware at the time but it turns out there is a strand of the beard of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ inside the envelopes. Could we have it back?'"

bulation. After its completion, he offered the *zuhr* salat. He then went to the zamzam well. Nightfall was approaching when that day he eventually returned to Mina, where he was to spend the days and nights of *tashriq*. During the evenings, however, he continued his regular visits of Kaabah.

After the day of sacrifice, during the afternoon of both the first and second days of *tashriq*, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ walked to the first *jamrah* near the Mina Masjid. On the last day of *tashriq*, he threw his third and last *jamrah*, after which he moved from Mina to Muhassab[624] in the afternoon. Noticing that the Believers were becoming prone to separating and heading out from Muhassab in their own ways, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ declared "Do not leave unless your final destination is Kaabah!" (Darimi, Manasiq, 85)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ afterwards made it known that there would be a final circumambulation of Kaabah before *fajr* salat on the fourteenth day of Dhil-hijjah. In the meantime, someone came and posed a question about staying in Mecca. "Mecca is not a place to stay", answered the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. "For those who come outside of Mecca to offer their pilgrimage, the period of stay is three days." (Ahmad, IV, 339)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ used to conduct himself towards the Sacred House with enormous respect. If he wanted to eat or take care of a need, he would go outside the precinct, to a place remote. Fearing a feeling of tiredness might arise or that he might make a slip-up in his respect towards Kaabah, he would never stay there for an extended period of time. After all, to be in an other location with the heart attached to Kaabah is preferable to being in its vicinity yet perceiving it like any other place, carrying on in a disrespectful manner, preoccupied with the desire to head back home or any other location.

After offering the farewell circumambulation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and the Companions made their return to Medina. (Bukhari, Hajj, 21, 70, 128; Muslim, Haj, 147; Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 84)

As Allah, glory unto Him, had now completed His favor and perfected the religion, time was now near for the greatest of all separations and reunions.

624. Muhassab lies between Mina and Mecca, closer to Mina however. It was there that the leaders of Quraysh had decided to place an embargo on the Muslims. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ recalled that the moment he arrived at Muhassab. (Bukhari, Hajj, 45)

THE ELEVENTH YEAR OF HEGIRA

Reunion and the Great Farewell: The Sublime Journey to the 'Highest Companion'

The first and last link in the chain of prophets, Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, the Light of Being, a mercy to all worlds, was struck down with a fever after his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage. The fever would prove to be the illness that was to separate him from his *ummah* and unite him with his *Rafiq'ul-A'la*, the Highest Companion; the reunion he had been waiting for, for his entire life. Having realized that his time was now near, especially with the revelation of *Surah* an-Nasr, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was now preparing for the final journey, bidding farewell to everyone, alive and deceased, in an implying manner. He had gone to the *Jannat'ul-Baqi* cemetery a day before he became ill and looking at the graves, had prayed, "O my Lord, the Supreme…do not deprive Your mercy from those who lie here!" (Ahmad, III, 489)

After coming back from the cemetery, he ascended the *minbar* of the Mosque and addressed the Companions in the below words, virtually, of good-bye:

"I will be the first of you to reach the Pool of Kawthar and I will meet you there! Our meeting place is the Pool. I see it at this moment! I will testify on your behalf! I have been given at this moment the treasures of earth and their keys. By Allah, I fear not that you will return to idolatry after me! But I fear that you will get carried away in worldly greed and become jealous of each other, kill one another and perish just like those have perished before you!" (Bukhari, Janaiz, 73; Muslim, Fadail, 31)

Coming down from the *minbar*, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then retreated to his chamber, exhausted. The illness grew worse by each passing day. Once it became unbearably intense, being the pillar of courtesy he was, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ asked permission from his honorable wives to pass his remaining days in the chamber of Aisha ﵂. (Bukhari, Tibb, 22; Ahmad, VI, 34, 38; Balazuri, I, 545)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had never undergone an illness of such intensity until then. The pure and clean life he led was of the kind that kept away illness altogether. But the grand yet burdensome duty of prophethood[625] well above ordinary human

625. In the process of receiving Revelation, the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ body would become exceedingly heavy. If he was on camelback, for instance, it would buckle the legs of the camel to the point where onlookers would begin to fear they would break, forcing the camel to crouch on the spot. (Ahmad, II, 176; VI, 445; Ibn Saad, I, 197) Zayd ibn Thabit ﵁ says, "I was sitting next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ one day. Because of the crowd of people, his knee was slightly above mine, leaning against it.

capacity that he had been carrying out for the past twenty-three years and the malicious acts of numerous kinds his enemies had methodically inflicted him with right from the start had, in the end, worn his body out. All this made it possible for illness to make its way into his body.

On another note, the illness was to elevate him to a lofty rank and a high standing. The effects of the poison he tasted at Khaybar also played an important role in the illness. Indeed, during a moment when the intensity of the illness was taking its toll, the Noble Messenger ﷺ said to Aisha ﵂, "I have been constantly feeling the sting of the poisoned meat I tasted at Khaybar, Aisha; and now I can hear the severing of the vein in my heart." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83)

Similarly, Anas ibn Malik ﵁ is reported to have said, "I used to notice the mark and the effects of this poison on his uvula." (Muslim, Salam, 45)

Because of this poison, the Light of Being ﷺ thus passed away as a martyr; and Allah, glory unto Him, who had already honored him with prophethood, was now granting him the blessing of martyrdom as well. (Ibn Hisham, III, 390; Waqidi, II, 678-679; Haythami, VI, 153)

So severe was the heat of the fever that had gotten hold of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that it was causing him to sweat unceasingly; it was like water relentlessly dripping from a hanging water bottle. Abu Said al-Khudri ﵁, who had come to visit him, could not help to remark, "What a severe fever you have, Messenger of Allah". He continues to recount:

"I placed my hand on him. I could feel the heat of his fever from above the blanket. 'You have such a high fever, Messenger of Allah', said I, to which he replied, 'We (prophets) are like that. Troubles come to us in scores but so are their rewards.'

'Who are inflicted with troubles most among humans, Messenger of Allah?' I then asked.

'Prophets', he said.

'And then?'

'Then the righteous', he replied, after which he added, 'among them are persons inflicted with so much tribulation that they cannot find anything else other than a

Suddenly, he began receiving Revelation. By Allah, I have never experienced anything heavier that his knee at the time. I thought it was only a matter of time before my knee was crushed." (Ahmad, V, 190-191)

woolen cloth to cover themselves. They rejoice troubles, just as you rejoice abundance.'" (Ibn Majah, Fitan, 23)

The rigor of his illness did not allow him to join the *jamaah* in his final days. He appointed Abu Bakr ﷺ to lead the Companions in salat. Feeling slightly rejuvenated at one stage, he made an appearance in the *Masjid*, in front of the Companions, to whom he said the following words:

"Allah, the Glorious has left a servant of His, free to choose between the world and its adornments and the blessings of His presence…and that servant has chosen the blessings of His presence!"

The sensitive Abu Bakr ﷺ knew, without delay, that the words the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had uttered were of farewell. He became overwhelmed with incommunicable grief. He felt dejected and began to weep, somehow managing to say, "May our parents be ransomed for you Messenger of Allah! We could sacrifice ourselves, our parents, children and all else we have for you!" (Ahmad, III, 91)

No other Companion present was able to make out the inner gist of the Prophet's ﷺ words, apart from Abu Bakr ﷺ, 'the second of the two' at Cave Sawr, as he is referred to by the Quran.

It has been reported that the Noble Messenger ﷺ said, "I have infused Abu Bakr with whatever there is in my heart."[626]

Upon seeing the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ loyal friend reduced to tears, the astounded Companions began saying to one another, "Isn't it odd that the Messenger of Allah speaks of some righteous person wishing to return to his Lord and Abu Bakr over there weeps?" (Bukhari, Salat, 80)

In fact, Abu Bakr's ﷺ delicate heart had sensed the great separation that was looming and had begun weeping like the reed flute bemoaning from separation. Once the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ condition intensified, the other Companions, too, began sensing a glimpse of the greatest of all separations, which was now only a matter of time. Solemn grief took hold of the *Ansar* and the *Muhajirun*.

"Wouldn't it be good if you prayed to regain your health, Messenger of Allah?" some Companions suggested. But the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who, until then, had always prayed for good health, this time refused to do so.

Aisha ﷺ explains:

"When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ fell ill, he would read al-Falaq and an-Nas, breathe into his hands and then rub his entire body with it. As his illness aggravated, I began doing the same; reading the two *surah*, breathing into my hands and then

626. See, Ajlunî, *Kashfu'l-Khafâ*, v. 2, p.419.

rubbing his entire body. I also said a prayer that Jibril ﷺ had said previously when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had become ill, which was 'The Lord of humankind! Heal this illness! Cure lies only in Your Hands! No one else apart from You can provide a cure! Give me such a cure that it leaves not a remnant of illness!' But then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned around towards me and said, 'Better you take your hands of me, for your prayer shall no longer be of any avail…I am waiting for my time!"
(Ahmad, VI, 260-261; Ibn Saad, II, 210)

Aisha ﷺ continues:

"The Messenger of Allah then called his precious daughter, the delicate Fatimah. 'Welcome, my daughter', he said as she arrived. He had her seated next to him, whereupon he said something to her in a quiet tone. Fatimah then began to cry. He then quietly said something else to her, which this time made her happy and she began to smile.

Never had I known, until that day, that a smile could be so close to tears and tears so close to a smile. I asked Fatimah the reason and she said, 'He informed that he would end up passing away as a result of his illness. I cried over that. He then told me that I would be the first one to reunite with him. And that made me happy.'"
(Bukhari, Maghazi, 83)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was able to lead the Companions in salat at times when his illness was of a lesser intensity. On one of those occasions, he addressed the Companions, who were distraught by the grief of coming to terms with separating from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in the following manner:

"People…

I hear that you fear for the death of your Prophet! But has there even been a prophet, sent before me, who has stayed with his people forever that I should remain with you forever more? Be well aware that I am to reunite with my Lord; and so will you! Without a doubt, al things take place with the permission of Allah.

Be well aware that I will go before you and wait for you! Beware; our meeting spot tomorrow in the Hereafter is the head of the Kawthar Pool. Whosoever wants to meet with me tomorrow, let him remove his hands and tongue from sin. People… Sins are cause for a change of fortune. When people are good, their leaders are good, too…when people are bad, so too are their leaders. By Allah in whose Hand of Might my life resides, at this hour, I am standing above of my Pool and gazing at it from where I am…"

At this point, the Noble Messenger ﷺ turned his gaze towards the weeping Abu Bakr ﷺ.

"Do not cry, Abu Bakr", he urged, as he continued his words. "People…Nobody else has been more selfless and generous in wealth and friendship than Abu Bakr. If I were to adopt a friend among humans other than my Lord, it surely would have been Abu Bakr…Close all the doors that open to the *Masjid*. Keep only Abu Bakr's door open…I see a light hovering above his door." (Bukhari, Salat, 80; Ibn Saad, II, 227)

"My Companions,

I am after all a human being. I therefore may have infringed on the rights of some among you. Whoever's skin I may have hurt, here is my skin! Let him come and restore his right! Whoever's back I may have hit, here is my back! Whoever's property I may have unknowingly seized, here is mine…Let him come and take it!

O my Lord! I am but a human being. Whichever Muslim I may have reproached, I may have hit or cursed, render that a means for their purity, reward and mercy! (Ahmad, III, 400)

O my Lord! Whichever Muslim I may have reproached, render that a means of his closeness with You on the Day of Judgment!" (Bukhari, Daawat, 34; Darimi, Muqaddimah, 14; Ibn Saad, II, 255; Tabari, Tarih, III, 191; Halabi, 463-464)

To all intents and purposes, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was hence bidding farewell to the Companions. After these words, he retreated to his room, exhausted. It would be the last time he would ever lead the Believers in salat. Thereafter, only on one final occasion would he be able gather his strength and offer salat behind the lead of Abu Bakr ؓ.

On a Monday morning on the 12th of Rabiulawwal, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ felt one last breeze of relief, yet not enough strength for him to join the Companions in salat. He only lifted the curtain that hung above the door of his chamber and gazed, for the very last time, at the mass of Believers standing shoulder to shoulder, offering *fajr* salat behind the lead of Abu Bakr ؓ. Delighted by what he saw, he smiled in utter satisfaction. It was as if the grip of the uncompromising illness had departed for a moment, making way for the contentment of leaving behind a righteous mass of Believers, enhanced with the relief of having properly executed the duty entrusted by Allah, glory unto Him. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83; Adhan, 46, 94; Muslim, Salat, 98; Nasai, Janaiz, 7)

Looking on was Aisha ؓ:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was smiling as watched his Companions offer salat. I had never before seen him so happy." (Ibn Hisham, IV, 331)

Allah, glory unto Him, had granted the Blessed Prophet ﷺ a blessing greater than that of any other prophet before him. He lived to see the triumph of the Call. The Arabian Peninsula had now been purified of idols, shattered and demolished by the very people that once reverently stood in front of them to worship. People who,

in the not so distant past, used to bury their own daughters alive, had now become pillars of compassion, moulded by the very hands of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the best of all educators, who had now rendered them virtual wonders of creation.

On the same morning, he commanded an army of Companions he had prepared from before, whose departure had however been delayed due to his illness, to set out. To the young commander, Usamah bin Zayd ؓ, he suggested, "Leave around midmorning, with the blessings of Allah!" (Waqidi, III, 1120)

Later on in the same day, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ told Aisha ؓ to distribute among the poor the six or seven dinars he had with her. Not long after, he inquired whether she did as she was asked to. Finding out that it had slipped her mind owing to her concerns over his illness, he asked for the dinars. Then taking them in his hands, he said:

"Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah, is not one to deem it proper to reunite with his Lord with these in his hands, without having given them away to the poor". He then distributed the dinars among five *Ansari* families after which he remarked, "Now I feel relieved", taking a light nap shortly thereafter.[627] (Ahmad, VI, 104; Ibn Saad, II, 237-238)

There; a never-ending charity!

For the *Ahl'ul- Bayt* he had the following words:

"Beware, people, the fire rages. Tribulations are looming, like hordes in the night! I have only made permissible what is permissible by the Quran, the Book of Allah, and prohibited what is prohibited therein!

Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah! Safiyya! Offer deeds worthy in the sight of Allah! For I shall not be able to save you from His punishment (unless you do your part in servanthood)!" (Ibn Saad, II, 256; Bukhari, Manaqib, 13-14; Muslim, Iman, 348-353)

"Beware…beware to seize onto salat!" said the Blessed Prophet ﷺ on the same day. "Treat those under your care kindly! Fear Allah on their behalf! Do not neglect to clothe and feed them. Speak to them caringly!" (Abu Dawud, Adab, 123-124/5156; Ibn Majah, Wasaya, 1)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ used his *miswaq* to brush his teeth that day with a heightened enthusiasm. "It was as if I had never before seen the Messenger of Allah

627. Imam Kastallani, in relation, comments, "If the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Beloved of the Lord of the Worlds, the greatest of all prophets whose past and future sins have been forgiven thinks this way, then just think of the situation of those who return to Allah having infringed on the rights of other Muslims, having appropriated what is impermissible to them of their wealth." (Kastallânî, II, 480-481)

use his *miswaq* more beautifully", comments Aisha ﵂. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83; Ibn Saad, II, 261)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ had a small water container by his side. Time and again, he used to dip his hand into it and moisten his face, and say, "*La ilaha ill-Allah*… surely death has its (bouts of) inebriation." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ prayed in the following manner that day:

"O my Lord…Encompass me with your compassion! Take me to *Rafiq'ul-A'la*! Allah! Encompass me with your compassion! Grant me your mercy! Take me to *Rafiq'ul-A'la*!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83; Ahmad, VI, 126)

At some point during the day, the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ consoled his dejected daughter Fatimah ﵂, saying, "Do not cry, dear, and when I pass away, say اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ: To Allah we belong and to Him is our return!" (Ibn Saad, II, 312)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ gave a similar word of caution to his Companions, reminding them of the *ayah* revealed in the darkest hour of Uhud when the Believers came to the brink of annihilation upon the circulation of the rumor that 'Muhammad had been killed':

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِى اللهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ

"And Muhammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least and Allah will reward the grateful." (Al-i Imran, 144)

Jibril ﵇, the Angel of Revelation, came to the Prophet ﷺ on the same day and announced, "Peace and blessings to you, Messenger of Allah. This is the last time I am stepping foot on Earth for you!" (Ibn Saad, II, 259)

The words the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had uttered earlier that day, were now gradually coming to life: "The spirit of a prophet is never taken until he is shown his station in Paradise! Then it is left upto him to proceed thereto!" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83, 84; Ahmad, VI, 89)

Arriving afterwards in the wake of Jibril ﵇ was the Angel of Death ﵇. He asked permission to enter the presence of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Granted permission, he came in, stood as he said, "Messenger of Allah! Ahmad! Allah the Almighty has sent me to you, ordering me to comply with whatever your command may be. If you wish, I shall take your spirit; if not, I shall leave it with you!"

Jibril ﷺ, who was still next to them at that point, remarked, "Allah the Almighty misses you, Messenger of Allah!"

To the Angel of Death ﷺ, waiting for a response, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said, "That which is by the side of Allah is better and longer lasting! So, Angel of Death, do what you have been commanded to do; take my spirit!" (Ibn Saad, II, 259; Haythami, IX, 34-35; Balazuri, I, 565)

He then, for one last time, dipped his hand into the water container by his side, moistened his face. He had now begun to make his way through the threshold of reunion at the final moments of a life dominated by a yearning for the Divine. Uttering the words of *tawhid*, he said:

"O my Lord! *Rafiq'ul-A'la*! *Rafiq'ul-A'la*!" and surrendered his pure spirit. The hand with which he had moistened his face had slowly and elegantly dropped inside the water container. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83)

The *ayah* revealed years ago:

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُونَ

"Surely you shall die and they too shall surely die." (az-Zumar, 30) was now realized.

Allah…Pray onto our Blessed Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, his progeny and companions; render them all sacred and grant your greetings onto them...And render this an eternal prayer!

The members of the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ family found themselves immersed in a flood of grief-stricken tears the moment he passed away. In the meantime, despite nobody seeing it, they all heard a soothing voice of condolence, comforting them.

"May Allah's peace and blessings be on you", it said.

After the *Ahl'ul-Bayt* responded in the same way, the same voice was again heard, this time echoing an *ayah*:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

"Every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the day of resurrection; then whoever is removed far away from the fire and is made to enter the garden he indeed has attained the object; and the life of this world is

nothing but a provision of vanities." (Al-i Imran, 185) This was followed by a similar tone of consolation:

"Know that there is a consolation in the sight of Allah for each disaster, a successor for each deceased and a something in return for each to have passed away! Clutch onto Allah and expect what you expect from Him! One who is truly inflicted is one who has been deprived of rewards (in the Hereafter)! May Allah's peace and blessings be on you!" (Ibn Saad, II, 259)

Ibn Omar ﷺ attests, "The entire *Ahl'ul-Bayt*, everyone in the *Masjid* and those standing on the street heard that voice." (Balazuri, I, 564) Ali ﷺ states that the voice belonged to Khidr ﷺ. (Ibn Saad, II, 260)

So overwhelmed with sorrow was Fatimah ﷺ from being separated from her father that she said, "Such a disaster has been poured onto me with the departure of the Prophet of Allah that if it was to be poured onto daylight, it would surely turn its glow into pitch black." (Diyarbakri, II, 173)

Fatimah ﷺ was never seen smiling in the six months of life she lived subsequent to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. (Kâmil Mîras, Tecrîd Tercemesi, XI, 25-26)

After a severe illness that lasted thirteen days following his return to Medina, on Monday the 12th of Rabiulawwal, in the 11th year of Hegira (8 June, 632), the gates of the sublime horizons opened for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Beloved, who, passing through it finally reunited with the Greatest of all Friends, Allah, glory unto Him.

Though they could not entirely come to grips with their emotions, the Companions now felt that the gist of life itself had departed. Bilal Habashi ﷺ, the Prophet's ﷺ *muaddhin*, could not manage to call out the *adhan* ever again after that day with that beautiful voice of his that filled the entire skies. Whenever the Companions insisted he do so, Bilal ﷺ would make a move; but suddenly unable to see to Blessed Prophet ﷺ take his usual place at the front of the *Masjid*, he would feel stifled, lose his voice and break down, returning without being able to go through with the *adhan*. In hope of putting out the blaze of love ravaging his heart, he moved away from Medina, to Damascus. Some time later, he saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his dream.

"How long must this separation last, Bilal?" he was telling him. "Isn't it time you visited me?"

Distressed, Bilal ﷺ suddenly woke up. Without further ado, he left, this time to visit the hallowed grave of the Noble Prophet ﷺ in Medina. Just as he was bowling his eyes out in the presence of his beloved, shedding tears on his grave, Hasan and Hussain ﷺ arrived. Elated to see the dear grandsons of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, Bilal ﷺ warmly hugged them.

"We would love to hear you call the *adhan*, Bilal", they pleaded, and to their wish Bilal ؓ succumbed. His *adhan* shook Medina. When he came to the part *Ashadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah*, all the men and women of the town took to the streets and began pouring into the Mosque, thinking the Noble Prophet ﷺ had come back to life. Since the passing away of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, never had there been a day in which the dwellers of Medina shed more tears. (Ibn Athir, Usd'ul-Ghabah, I, 244-245; Dhahabi, Siyar, I, 357-358)

Stating the following is Anas ibn Malik ؓ:

"I have never seen a day more lit and prettier than the day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Bakr arrived in Medina. I also witnessed the day in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away. I have never seen a day darker, gloomier and more dreadful. Everything in Medina had been set alight by the arrival of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Medina and then sent into darkness with his passing away! We buried his sacred corpse unwillingly, believing little that he had actually passed away!" (Ahmad, III, 221, 268, 287; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1/3618; Darimi, Muqaddimah, 14)

All troubles and tribulations that Muslims were to undergo thereafter would mean nothing. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ has stated, accordingly, "Muslims inflicted with a trouble of some kind or another should think and find consolation in the tribulation they are inflicted with through my passing away, and keep patient." (Muwatta', Janaiz, 41; Darimi, Muqaddimah, 14)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ also says:

"My health is of benefit to you: you talk with me and I talk with you! My passing away is also of benefit to you: your deeds are presented to me; upon seeing your good deeds, I thank Allah for it and upon seeing your bad deeds, I pray Allah for your forgiveness." (Haythami, IX, 24)

On the report of Aisha ؓ, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ passed his final moment in praise of the Almighty, repentance and thanks. He was incessantly repeating, "*Subhanallahi wa bi-hamdihi, astaghfirullaha wa atubu ilayh*: I negate Allah from attributes unworthy of His Divine Status and give my thanks to Him. I wish for Him to forgive me and I repent for my sins." (Bukhari, Adhan, 123, 139; Muslim, Salat, 218-220; Ahmad, I, 393; Ibn Saad, II, 192)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ had a Divine mark right between his shoulder blades, attesting to his prophethood. Many a Companion would live in yearning just to kiss it. After he breathed his last, as there was no change in his glowing expression, the Companions began to doubt whether he had really passed away. Asma bint Umays

ﷺ, a relative of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, thereupon looked for the seal of prophethood on his back. Noticing it had disappeared out of sight, they finally became convinced he had made the eternal journey.[628]

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ left neither a coin of dirham behind, nor a slave. His legacy consisted merely of the white mule he rode, a weapon and some land at Khaybar and Fadak, which he had already handed over as trust for wayfarers.[629]

The Noble Messenger ﷺ passed away on Monday and was buried the next day. The Companions offered his funeral salat individually; no one *imam* led a congregation. Some suggested he be buried right next to the *minbar* of the *Masjid*. Others thought the Baqi Cemetery would be suitable. The discussion was ultimately ended by Abu Bakr ﷺ, who stated, "I had heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'Each prophet is buried where he dies'". They hence began digging the exact spot where he breathed his last.[630]

Getting prepared to wash the Prophet's ﷺ corpse, they made an attempt to remove his shirt, only to be thwarted by a sudden voice they heard, commanding them not to take off his shirt! So they washed him without removing his shirt.[631]

Abdullah ibn Masud ﷺ recounts:

"Our beloved Messenger of Allah had informed us of his death a month before. 'Who is to lead your funeral salat, Messenger of Allah?' we asked, full of tears. He, too, began shedding tears, as he said, 'Hold on; may Allah have mercy on you all! May He reward you with good for the sake of His prophet! After you wash and enshroud me, lay me on my mattress over there, next to my grave in this house! Then leave the room for a few moments, for first my two friends Jibril and Mikail will offer my salat; then Israfil and the Angel of Death, with the army of angels by his side. Afterwards enter the room in groups; offer my salat and send your prayers and peace. But do not disturb me by praising me or yelling and shouting.

Let the male members of my family offer my salat first and then the females. You can offer it afterwards.

Send my greetings to my Companions who are not present here! Send my greetings to all those to follow me, in my Religion, until the Final Hour, too!" (Hayhtami, IX, 25; Ibn Saad, ii, 256-257)

628. Ibn Saad, II, 272; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya,* V, 231.
629. Bukhari, Maghazi, 83.
630. Qadi Iyad says, "There is not a shadow of a doubt that the place where the Prophet of Allah ﷺ lies is the noblest piece of land on earth." (*Shifa,* II, 96) Imam Busiri similarly states, "There is no better fragrance than that of the soil that boasts the sacred body of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ in its bosom. How lucky he is who has smelt and kissed that soil." (Qasidah-i Burdah, Bayt no: 58)
631. *Muwatta*, Janâiz, 27; Ahmad, VI, 267.

Everything was carried out in line with the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ wishes. Ali ؓ declared, "Let nobody have any doubts seeing that there is no imam leading the salat of the Prophet ﷺ. He is your *imam* in his death, as he was in life!" Then standing across the Prophet's ﷺ corpse, he pronounced:

"May Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be unto you, Messenger of Allah!

Allah! We bear witness that he communicated what You revealed to him, advised his *ummah* and fought in Your way until You rendered Your Religion supreme and fulfilled Your word!

Allah! Render us among those who follow Him in what You revealed to Him! Give us perseverance in this path after him, too! Make us reunite with him!" A humming sound of *amin* was heard from the crowd of Believers, as he was making these prayers. (Ibn Saad, II, 291)

What bliss for the earth to keep the Noblest of Creation ﷺ in her bosom.

With the religion now perfected and a testimony given to Allah, glory unto Him, by the entire Companions that His Messenger had fulfilled his duty of communicating what had been revealed, the Light of Being ﷺ had now been called to the realm of eternity.

He now waits for his *ummah* on the plain of Resurrection, on the *Sirat*, by the Pool of *Kawthar*.

Please intercede on our behalf, too, Prophet of Allah!

He had honored the world on a Monday, the 12th of Rabiulawwal and had been entrusted with prophethood, again, on a Monday of the same month. Abu Qatadah ؓ narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked about fasting on a Monday. 'That is my birthday and the day I was sent as prophet' he replied." (Muslim, Siyam, 197-198)

Again, it was it was in the morning the 12th of Rabiulawwal when he entered Medina and laid the foundation of the Islamic sovereignty to survive until the Final Hour. It would ultimately be its anniversary, the 12th of Rabiulawwal, when he departed the world for eternity, to anticipate his *ummah* and intercede compassionately on their behalf.

Poetically depicting the world as disloyal for having carried off the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi –May Allah have mercy on him- writes:

Who is to expect loyalty; you are the world of deceit, are you not?

The world that has abducted Muhammad Mustafa, are you not?

A Grief to Absorb the Whole Universe

Upon the passing away of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Fatimah ؓ bewailed, as she said behind tearful eyes, "My dearest father, who for His Lord there is nobody closer! My dearest father who as attended the invitation of His Lord! My dearest father whose rank is the Paradise of *Firdaws*! My dearest father whose passing away we have notified Jibril!" After he was buried, she said to Anas ؓ:

"How did your hearts allow you to throw soil on the Messenger of Allah?" (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83; Darimi, Muqaddimah, 14)

Out of courtesy, Anas ؓ did not respond; yet the somber look in his eyes said, "No, Fatimah, our hearts did not allow us but we forced ourselves to comply with the Prophet's ﷺ order!" (Kâmil Mîras, Tecrîd Tercemesi, XI, 25)

Packed inside the Masjid, the Believers were wailing when they were interrupted by the voice of Omar ؓ. "Do not let me hear anyone say 'Muhammad ﷺ is dead" he shouted with despondent anger, "or I will sever his neck with my sword. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has fainted in the same manner as Musa ؑ!" He prolonged his fuming speech, to the point where his mouth even began to froth.

Immediately upon receiving the sad news, Abu Bakr ؓ mounted his horse and had it gallop to the *Masjid* in Medina. The first thing he did was uncover the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ face from beneath the shroud. Throwing himself on his sacred corpse, he wept as he kissed him on his forehead, shortly after which he remarked:

"By Allah, the Messenger of Allah has passed away. We belong to Allah and to Him is our return (*Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajiun*). May my parents be ransomed for you! I promise that Allah will not let you taste the pain of death twice! You have died once and you have now passed the threshold of the destined death! Never shall there be death for you anymore, my dearest Prophet…" He then leaned over and kissed once more the Prophet's beautiful face. Lifting his head once more, he wailed, "Oh my dearest friend!" as he landed another kiss on the forehead of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and then another.

"You were beautiful in life as you are in your death! How beautiful is, both your life and death!" he commented, after which he replaced the shroud over the face of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and walked out into the *Masjid*. Omar ؓ was in the meantime still continuing his heated speech urging Believers to deny the Prophet of Allah ﷺ had actually passed away.

"Time you sat down now, Omar", Abu Bakr ؓ remarked.

Beset with inexpressible feelings of grief, Omar ؓ had no intention of sitting down. Only after Abu Bakr ؓ repeated his advice a few more times could he

regain his composure and draw back to assume a seat. Abu Bakr ﷺ then began his speech:

"Allah, glory unto Him, had informed His Prophet of his imminent passage while he was still alive. He has also informed you all of your death, when the time comes. Not a single person among you shall survive death. Whosoever worships Muhammad ﷺ let him know that Muhammad ﷺ has passed away! But whosoever worships Allah, know that Allah is Ever-Alive, Immortal! Allah, glory unto Him, says:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِى اللهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ

'And Muhammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least and Allah will reward the grateful." (Al-i Imran, 144)

Reminded of the *ayah*, people slowly began coming to terms with the fact that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ had actually passed away. So stunned were they, however, in hearing Abu Bakr ﷺ recite the *ayah* that it was like they had no idea that it had been revealed long before.

"By Allah," Omar ﷺ later confessed, "it was like I had never heard that *ayah* until that day. Hearing it from Abu Bakr, I was terrified. My feet could not carry me; my knees suddenly grew weak and I collapsed on the spot!" (Ibn Saad, II, 266-272; Bukhari, Maghazi, 83; Haythami, IX, 32; Abdurrazzaq, V, 436)

Not long after Abu Bakr's ﷺ piercing speech, Omar ﷺ rushed to the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ corpse, leaned over and kissed him on the forehead. His eyes swelling with tears, he said:

"May my parents be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah! The date log, against which you used lean, had begun to weep from the pangs of your separation and had only gone quiet when you placed your hand on it…But your friend is worthier of weeping and moaning over your separation than that date log!

May my parents be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah! Your Lord has said:

مَّنْ يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللهَ

'Whoever obeys the Prophet has obeyed Allah' (an-Nisa, 80). He counts obeying you on level par with obeying Himself, whereby he raises your supremacy in His Sight to the highest rank!

May my parents be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah! Despite sending you as the last of all prophets, Allah has again raised your virtue to the highest rank, by obtaining an oath of allegiance[632] from all the previous prophets, to believe and help you!

May my parents be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah! The longing the dwellers of Hellfire will develop tfor you while being punished, as they will say:

يَا لَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا اللهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولا

'…if only we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!' (al-Ahzab, 66), has elevated your worth in the Sight of Allah to its ultimate degree!" (Kastallani, II, 492)

Recounting the sad memories of that day below is Umm Salamah ﵂:

"We had gathered around the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and were crying the day he passed away. His beautiful corpse was still inside our house and we were consoling ourselves by looking at him. When we heard the sounds of picks just after dawn, we wailed; so did the crowd waiting inside the *Masjid*. Medina shook by the sound of a solitary scream. Especially hearing Bilal ﵁ sob while calling out the *adhan* when he came to the part *Ashadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah*, aggravated our grief all the more. As people began charging towards the grave, those inside shut the door on them. How painful a day that was! Whenever we were burdened by another trouble thereafter, we would instantly remind ourselves of the pain we felt the day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, and not take any notice of it." (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, V, 256)

As they loved him more than everyone and everything else, the Companions found separating from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ agonizingly difficult. There were many among the Companions who no longer wished to live a life without him, to have eyes that were no longer going to catch sight of him or ears that were never to hear him speak again. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had in fact foretold of their plight long ago in a *hadith*:

"By Allah, in whose Hand of Might the life of Muhammad resides, a day will come when you will no longer be able to see me. Seeing me in your company, then, will become dearer and worthier to anyone of you than his family and entire wealth!" (Muslim, Fadail, 142; Bukhari, Manaqib, 25)

632. See, Âl-i İmrân, 81.

They saw out the remainder of their lives in anticipation of the day when they would once again reunite with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and enjoy his sight eternally.

Othman ؓ explains:

"If there was ever a person among the Companions to grieve the most over the passing away of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, that surely was me. Others, it is true, grieved over him, too. There were even some who developed anxiety after his bereavement. While I was sitting under the shade of a wall, Omar ؓ had apparently walked passed me and greeted me. I did not even take notice of his greeting, let alone seeing him walk pass. It turns out that Omar later went to Abu Bakr ؓ and said, 'I just walked past Othman, greeted him but he did not greet me back. Could there be a thing more bizarre?'

I later noticed the two of them come by. They greeted me, after which Abu Bakr asked, 'Your brother Omar came to me, telling me that he greeted you, without you responding. What is the reason?'

'I did not do anything of the kind' I replied, to which Omar immediately countered by saying, 'By Allah, you did!'

'By Allah, I was neither aware of you walking past or nor of you greeting me!' I said.

'Othman speaks the truth', concluded Abu Bakr." (Ahmad, I, 6)

Shortly after the Blessed Prophet ﷺ passed away, Omar ؓ suggested to Abu Bakr ؓ they should visit Umm Ayman ؓ, as the Prophet ﷺ did during his life. So they did. Upon seeing them, Umm Ayman ؓ broke down in tears.

"Why are you crying?" they asked. "Don't you know that the blessings prepared by Allah for the Prophet ﷺ are much better than the world?"

"I am not crying because of that", she replied. "Of course I know that the blessings prepared by Allah for the Prophet ﷺ are much better than the world. I am crying because Revelation has come to an end." Her sensitive considerations sent Abu Bakr and Omar ؓ into a stir of emotion. They, too, joined her in shedding tears. (Muslim, Fadail'us-Sahabah, 103)

Years later, as Omar ؓ was patrolling the streets of Medina as Caliph, he noticed a candlelight shining forth from inside a house. As he came closer, he saw an old woman inside, spinning wool and at the same time reciting a poem to herself.

"Upon Muhammad ﷺ be the peace of the righteous…For your mercy, Muhammad, let every unique soul pray…You used to worship at night and weep at dawn… Death approaches closer to all, day by day…The abode of the Hereafter will reunite me with you…If only I could say!"

Omar ﷺ sat down and cried awhile. He then knocked on the door.

"Who is it?" asked the elderly woman.

"It is Omar ibn Khattab."

"What is Omar doing here at this time of night; what can he want from me?" she inquired, fretfully.

"For your love of Allah, please open the door. Do not be afraid!" beseeched Omar ﷺ, upon which she opened the door ajar.

"Read the poem you read moments ago", he then insisted. She began to. Just before she came to the final line, Omar ﷺ interrupted and said, "I beg you to add me in your company, too!"

She then changed the final line of her poem to, "The abode of the Hereafter will reunite me with you and Omar…If only I could say; Allah, the Forgiver, have mercy on Omar!" Omar ﷺ then left, gratified. (Ali al-Muttaqi, XII, 562/35762)

Anas ﷺ used to say, "Not a single night comes to pass without me seeing my Beloved (the Prophet ﷺ) in my dream", and cry. (Ibn Saad, VII, 20)

The Companions used to refer to the Blessed Prophet as *habibi* (my beloved) or *khalili* (my dearest friend), expressions of the overflowing love they nurtured for him.[633]

By virtue of incessantly sending *salat'us-salam* to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, they were showing their undying love and attachment to him; yet their remembering of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was not reserved exclusively to that. Their uncompromising abidance by his path, their adherence to his sunnah, their constant mention of his *ahadith* at every given opportunity, among the many other deeds they embodied, were ways of keeping his loving memory ever alive.

Abu Dharr ﷺ states, "I promise by Allah that the Messenger ﷺ left us in such a state when he left for the Hereafter that even a bird flapping its wings in the sky would remind us of a saying of his. For he had truly said, '…whatever may take you closer to Paradise and distance you from Hell, has all been disclosed.'" (Ahmad, V, 153, 162; Haythami, VIII, 263)

It is an imperative of Islam that all Muslims love the Blessed Prophet ﷺ more than everyone and everything else in the world, prefer his commands and prohibitions to their own desires and unconditionally abide by his entire words and actions.

633. Bukhari, Tahajjud, 33; Sawm, 60; Muslim, Musâfirîn, 85; Ibn Majah, Sadaqât, 10; Darimî, Sawm, 38; Ahmad, V, 159; Ibn Saad, IV, 229.

USWAT'UL-HASANAH

The Quintessential Example

Among entire creation, it is only human beings who have been given the honor of taking a share from all the Divine Names of Allah, glory unto Him. Together with that, the Almighty has endowed human beings with the ability for both right and wrong, a tendency for both good and evil.

The aim of religion is therefore to minimize the negatives pertaining to the human ego to the point of annihilating them and in turn promote spiritual potentialities to their peak. But for the purpose to be realized, human beings need an actual example they can take after; an *uswat'ul-hasanah*, a quintessential example. One of the underlying wisdoms behind the sending of prophets lies in the fact of their providing an embodied example that human beings can follow. Allah, glory unto Him, declares:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ

"And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission…" (an-Nisa, 64)

This quality finds its consummate embodiment in the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as testified by the Almighty:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِى رَسُولِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ
حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللهَ كَثِيرًا

"Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah a quintessential example for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much." (al-Ahzab, 21)

No other man, let alone a prophet, has had the entire details of his life recorded in every minute detail. Documented moment by moment, the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ every single word, deed and feeling constitutes a plaque of honor in history. The Quran states:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

"And you stand on an exalted standard of character." (al-Qalam, 4)

Even with only its aspects graspable by human understanding, the life and the noble character of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ are on the highest scale of human conduct. Allah, glory unto Him, has presented him as a quintessential example, a supreme ideal for entire humankind. It is for no other reason that the Almighty made him begin his journey of life from the most vulnerable end as orphan, and then proceeded him through each difficult stage of life until finally elevating him to the peak of power and authority, as prophet and head of state; in order that people can find in him the most perfect example of conduct, in whatever level of the social scale they may be, and seek to realize the example he provides to the best of their capability. That is something attainable only by loving the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and embodying his spiritual perfection.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ is *the* head of both religion and state. He is an example for those entering the garden of Divine Love, and no less for his gratitude and humbleness when abounding in the blessings of the Almighty. Just as he is an example for his patience and trust in Allah, glory unto Him, in times dire, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is also an example for his generosity with and abstinence from the spoils of war. He is an example for extending the abundant compassion he had for his family to the slaves, the weak and stray; and all the more in his magnanimity and lenience towards the guilty.

If you are wealthy, then ponder the humbleness and generosity of that Great Prophet who reigned sovereign over entire Arabia and won over the hearts of every Arab notable through love…

If you are among the weak, then take reference from the Noble Prophet's ﷺ life in Mecca under the horrible pressure of oppressive idolaters…

If you are triumphant, reflect on the Prophet of courage and submission who routed the enemy at the battles of Badr and Hunayn…

But, Allah forbid, should you become defeated then remember the Prophet walking patiently and courageously amid his wounded and martyred Companions at the field of Uhud, having completely yielded to Divine Will…

And if you are a teacher, just think of the delicate**,** sensitive and affectionate Prophet conveying the pearls of his heart to the Students of *Suffa* by the *Masjid'un-Nabawi* …

If you are a student, picture the Prophet sitting before Jibril عليه السلام at the moment of Revelation, cautious and motivated, filled with respect.

If you are a preacher, a counselor calling to the good, then give ear to the pleasant voice of the Prophet flashing sparks of wisdom from his heart to his Companions at the *Masjid*…

If you are left without an aid in your desire to protect and communicate the Truth and elevate it, then take a look at the life of the Prophet who proclaimed the Truth to the ignorant and called them onto guidance at a time when he was deprived of all aid in Mecca…

If you have broken the resistance of the enemy and devastated evil to proclaim the Truth, then bring before your eyes the sight of the Prophet, who on the day of the Conquest, humbly and thankfully entered the sacred turf of Mecca, on camelback as if to fall prostrate, despite being a victorious commander…

If you own a land and want to put things on track, then draw a lesson from the Prophet of competence who appointed the most able to revive and administer, in the best possible way, the lands of Banu Nadir, Khaybar and Fadak after seizing possession of them…

If you are lonely, then reflect on the son of Abdullah and Aminah, their dearly loved orphan of innocence…

If you are a teenager, closely consider the life of the youth, the future prophet, shepherding the stock of Abu Talib at Mecca…

If you are a trader set out with loads of goods, ponder the integrity of the grandest man of the convoys destined for Yemen and Damascus…

If you are a judge, recall his just and prudential move in intervening to replace the Black Stone at the verge of Meccan notables going at each others' throats…

Then turn your glance once more to history and take a look at the Prophet in Medina at the *Masjid'un-Nabawi* delivering his verdict with the greatest conceivable justice between the poverty stricken destitute and well-to-do rich, as just as one can imagine.

If you are a spouse consider the deep emotions and compassion of the Beloved Husband of Khadijah and Aisha…

If you have children then learn the affectionate conduct of the father of Fatimah, the grandfather of Hasan and Husayn…

Whoever you may be and in whichever circumstance you may find yourself in, you will find Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ as the most perfect model and most beautiful guide at all times and places.

Such a master he is that one can correct all mistakes by following his Sunnah; and putting things back on course, make amends for all misplaced efforts. Following

the light of his guidance, one will at once rid his path of drawbacks and find himself reach the gates of happiness…

If you want to rescue yourself from becoming a slave to material and seek to lead a spiritual life, then take after the likes of Bilal, Yasir and Sawban ﷺ, all of whom were brought up by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Become someone trustworthy through their company, so that you acquire a heart of sensitivity, elegance and receptivity. Remember that it was through being guided through the efforts of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and then remaining steady by his side that turned the people of ignorance into trustworthy exemplars. Even Qitmir, the dog of *Ashab'ul-Kahf*, the Sleepers of the Cave, was given an enormous blessing owing simply to remaining constant by the side of the righteous. In stark contrast, Lut's ﷺ wife and Kanan, the son of Nuh ﷺ, were struck with the wrath of Allah, glory unto Him, for becoming mixed up with the wrongdoers. They and those alike have ultimately drowned in the whirlpool of their egos, suffering the same menacing end as the oppressors they took sides with.

Then strive to fill the remainder of your days in the company of the loyal and righteous devotees of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, so that you do not end up among the ignorant.

His existence resembled a garden adorned with the most exquisite and beautifully scented roses. Complementing the perfection of his unique spiritual constitution was his awe-inspiring appearance. His unparalleled worth in the sight of Allah, glory unto Him, leads Him to declare in the Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ إِنَّ اللهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

"O you who believe! Be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing. O you who believe! do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another, lest your deeds became null while you do not perceive." (al-Hujurat, 1-2)

The Quran thereby invites all Believers to adopt respect towards the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Despite addressing all other prophets by their names, the Quran never addresses the Blessed Prophet ﷺ directly by his name, preferring instead such appellations as '*Nabi*' or '*Rasul*'. Allah, glory unto Him, at the same time, enjoins all Muslims to take on a similar approach:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا

"Do not hold the Messenger's calling (you) among you to be like your calling one to the other…" (an-Nur, 63)

The *ayah* reveals that it is contrary to the nature and conduct of being a Muslim to refer to the Noble Messenger ﷺ only by his name, emphasizing the necessity of pronouncing, along with his name, his sublime and sacred attributes. When saying his name, one is therefore required to append to it titles like *Nabi*, *Rasul*, *Rasulullah* and *Habibullah* and in line with the command of the 56th *ayah* of al-Ahzab, say *salat'u salam* upon hearing his name mentioned. This is an important part of the manners the Almighty demands from us towards His Prophet ﷺ and commands the entire ummah to endorse. So declares the Quran:

إِنَّ اللهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

"Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation…" (al-Ahzab, 56)

Not only was the Blessed Prophet ﷺ a teacher who taught the Quran literally, he at the same time was a living embodiment of it. In a *hadith* narrated by Jabir ﷺ, he professes, "Allah has sent me to complement good morals." (Muwatta', Husn'ul-Khuluq)

All Islamic works written over the past 1400 years have had the sole aim of explaining the Holy Quran, and only one man, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. So precious does Allah, glory unto Him, consider his life to be that He pledges an oath on it; and it is only on the Prophet's ﷺ life that He does: لَعَمْرُكَ "By your life!" (al-Hijr, 72)

Gaining closeness to the Muhammedan Truth is possible not so much through reason but through love. And without a doubt, it is that Truth that solves all mysteries. Acquiring a share of the quintessential example of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, distancing oneself from the passing pleasures of the ego, becoming committed to worship and getting hold of the wisdom that unravels all the riddles of servanthood; it is these that provide a passage to that Truth. Once man begins to acquire an apportioned share of the Muhammedan Truth, he becomes an elegant display, a beauty of creation, on who the light and truth of the mysteries of Divine manifestations become embroidered.

The secrets of the Quran are unveiled to one's heart, to the extent of its depth in becoming one with the spirituality of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. And with regard to adhering to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the one and only standard for humankind, Allah, glory unto Him, declares:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ
فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ إِنَّ اللهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

"So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you; and fear Allah, for Allah is strict in punishment." (al-Hashr, 7)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ

"O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and do not make your deeds of no effect." (Muhammad, 33)

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُوْلَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ
وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

"And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a goodly company are they!" (an-Nisa, 69)

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فإِنْ تَوَلَّوْاْ فَإِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

" Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your faults, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger; but if they turn back, then surely Allah does not love the unbelievers." (Al-i Imran, 31-32)

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

"And he who obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and is careful of (his duty to) Him, these it is that are the achievers." (an-Nur, 52)

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ أُوْلَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللهُ إِنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

"And (as for) the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other; they enjoin good and forbid evil and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger; (as for) these, Allah will show mercy to them; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise." (at-Tawbah, 71)

مَّنْ يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا

"Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah, and whoever turns back, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them." (an-Nisa, 80)

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنْ يُحَادِدِ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ
جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْخِزْيُ الْعَظِيمُ

"Do they not know that whoever acts in opposition to Allah and His Messenger, he shall surely have the fire of hell to abide in it? That is the grievous abasement." (at-Tawbah, 63)

وَأَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ
رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"And obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel for then you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart, and be patient; surely Allah is with the patient." (al-Anfal, 46)

Shivering and feeling all esthetic sensations come to life over the love of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and beginning to empty the spirit of the presence of the ego along with all its blemishes, are sure signs that a Believer has entered the path of acquiring a share of the love of the Noble Messenger ﷺ and his exemplary character.

The heroes of the heart, who, having taken an apt share from the noble character of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in which they were virtually annihilated, have contin-

ued to provide uplifting examples, showing just what loving the Prophet ﷺ means. Life was what they found in the truth of the Prophet ﷺ.

One such hero was Sayyid Ahmad Yasawi, the great saint of Turkistan, who after turning sixty-three, the very age in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had passed away, deemed it inappropriate to 'walk on earth' any longer and dug a grave-like burrow in the ground, in which he lead the remaining time of his life.

When Uways al-Qarani heard the news that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ had suffered a broken tooth during the Battle of Uhud, not knowing exactly which tooth it was, he became estranged from every tooth in his mouth. Relief only came after he pulled out every single one of them, by virtue of which he was able to get rid of the mystery tooth, which he considered prevented him from total annihilation in the Prophet's ﷺ existence. (Fariduddin Attar, p. 23)

Imam Malik ﷺ was another who lived every moment of his life in the ecstasy of being one with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Out of respect, he never mounted a ride inside Medina. The Imam always spoke with a low voice at the *Rawdah*, the area between the *minbar* and the blessed grave of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. He therefore was quick to caution Abu Jafar Mansur, the Caliph at the time, who momentarily raised his voice there:

"Lower your voice in this area, Caliph. Allah's warning was to a group much more virtuous than you!" He followed this up by reminding the Caliph of the *ayah*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا
لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

"O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another, lest your deeds became null while you do not perceive." (al-Hujurat, 2)

Imam Malik, again, forgave the Governor of Medina who had caused him unjustified troubles, saying, "I would feel embarrassed to seek my rights in the Hereafter from an offspring of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ."

Expressing that it was only from the love of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that her spirit received its replenishment, Bezm-i Alem Valide Sultan wrote:

From love, was Muhammad born,
Without Muhammad…love is forlorn…

In 1678, the Ottoman poet Nabi embarked on a *hajj* journey with a number of state officials. As they reached closer to Medina, anxiety and excitement got the better of the poet and he lost all sleep. In the meantime, he noticed an official lying down unaware that he had stretched out his legs towards Medina. Depressed from the sight, Nabi began writing his celebrated ode to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. As their caravan got within a very short distance of the Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ, Nabi, much to his amazement, could hear his ode being read aloud from a minaret:

Desist from disrespect; this is the land of the Lord's Beloved,
The focus of Divine gaze, this is the site of the Prophet,

Enter this shrine, Nabi, intent only on utmost conduct,
This is the place prophets kiss, the precinct of the sacred…

Excited almost beyond belief, Nabi quickly found the *muaddhin*, asking him where he had learnt the ode from.

"Last night in our dream", he explained, "the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to us, 'A poet by the name of Nabi from my *ummah* is coming to visit me; a man who is very much filled with my love. Therefore, welcome him with his own ode from the minaret of the *Masjid*'. So we were only fulfilling his command."

Nabi was almost immediately reduced to tears of joy. "So the Prophet of Allah referred to me as someone from his *ummah*", he said as he wept. "So he has accepted me into his *ummah*…"

"A unique light that even the sun orbits", a poetic remark belonging to Suleyman Çelebi, the author of *Mawlid*, who conceives even the sun as revolving around the Noble Prophet ﷺ, depicting the undying love even physical entities have for him.

Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, who wrote poems under the pseudonym '*Muhibbi*', sends the below plea to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

The light of the universe you are, even the Beloved of the Lord,

Do not banish, even for a moment, your lovers from your door…

Ali ﷺ recounts:

"I used to walk with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Mecca. Together one day we went outside of Mecca. Every single stone and tree that we walked passed greeted him in the words 'Blessings and peace unto you Messenger of Allah!'" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 6/3626)

Displayed below is another manifestation of Prophetic love in physical entities:

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, while on a campaign, communicated Islam to a Bedouin he came across. The Bedouin asked for a proof attesting to his prophethood, upon which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ signaled to a tree ahead, calling it next to him. Complying immediately with the command of the Prophet ﷺ, the tree, splitting the ground as it dragged itself forth, came next to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and said, three times, the word of *shahadah* in his presence. Witnessing the scene in utter astonishment, the Bedouin remarked, as he parted ways to return to his tribe, "If my tribe listens to me, I will bring them to you; if not then I will return by myself and stay by your side!" (Haythami, VIII, 292)

Not only physical entities but also animals acknowledged the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and obeyed him. One such account is narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah ؓ:

"We were returning from a campaign with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. As we came near the gardens of Ibn'un-Najjar in Medina, we learnt that there was a wild camel, in the garden, attacking everyone that tried entering, not letting anyone inside. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was made aware of the situation. So he went there, entered the garden and called the wild camel that would not let anyone get near it. Hearing the voice of the Prophet ﷺ, the camel bowed its head, to the point where its lips were making contact with the ground, and humbly walked over to him, where it humbly crouched.

'Bring me a rope', then said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Placing the rope around the camel's neck, he then handed it to its owner, after which he said, 'Apart from the rebellious humans and *jinn*, all beings in heaven and earth know that I am the Messenger of Allah.'" (Ahmad, III, 310)

We must think and reassess the sincerity of our obedience and devotion to the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, in comparison with the profound state of love harbored by physical and living entities…

We stand in an enormous need for his spirituality, especially in these tumultuous times; a turbulence inciting the poet to call out for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ: "Wake up, the Master of the Universe, for the Day of Judgment is nigh!"[634]

How great sources of consolation we have in our *salawat*, the greetings through which we keep our communication with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ ever alive and in the love we feel for him…

634. Bernard Shaw, who has come to terms with this fact, admits, "In our times where problems are piled upon one another, we stand in desperate need of Prophet Muhammad who can solve all problems with ease."

Sensitive Muslims with an elegance of spirit have considered it the greatest blessing in the world to gain closeness to the truth of the Prophet ﷺ by virtue of letting go of their selves in his spiritual path; and as a result have immersed themselves in Divine zests.

The utterly magnificent character of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ which we have here attempted to summarize so far, within the limited opportunity provided by words, are mere rays reflecting onto our understanding from that great Light of Being ﷺ. The secret behind *wasl ila'Allah*, or reaching Allah, glory unto Him, lies in becoming intimate with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, with a genuine heart, and in loving those whom Allah and His Messenger loves and detesting whom they detest. The difference between both is as infinite as the distance between *a'la-i iliyyin* and *asfal-i safilin*, the highest of the high and lowest of the low. Loving the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and hating the opposite of all that he signifies is the most powerful catalyst in enabling one to benefit from his spirituality.

Great Muslims, who throughout history have been able to emulate the quintessential example of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, have been able to reach the peak of *iman*; and by perfecting the tendency for the good inherent in their *fitrah*, or natural disposition, they have become shining stars in setting examples for others to follow.

There you have it; the Muhammedan Truth expressed, to the degree the understanding of an inept author can bear of it and the limited words, which he uses, can hold…

We must admit that the words delivered in this book to its subjects, known and unknown, are like a few drops from a boundless ocean. And they now stand exhausted before the majestic gates of a bottomless silence.

Allah…Render this audacious effort of ours, weighed down by the limited possibility provided by words, a means for Your abundant compassion and grant us thereby a share of the Muhammedan Truth! Make us attain to the great intercession of Your Prophet ﷺ, the essence and font of love!

Amin…

TO CONCLUDE

Being a universal worldview, not only is it natural for Islam to contain the principles of all teachings like law, morals and economics that regulate human behavior, it is moreover necessary for it to contain such standards, from the simplest and most concrete to the most intricate and abstract. Insofar as they pertain to simple, everyday affairs, some of these principles of Islam relate to everyone. Yet with that said, others comprise truths of a more profound nature, enough to leave even the most penetrating minds in awe. The sheer difficulties that come with exploring matters of such nature, especially through books written to convey them, therefore goes without saying. In a sense, this could be contrasted with trying to crawl on top of a steep peak, prepared to endure an uncompromising thirst in the long, arduous process. Without a doubt, the attempt to verbalize these intricate and abstract truths within the limited possibilities presented by language has been an appealing pursuit most have found difficult to relinquish. The fact remains, however, that a complete success there is forever elusive.

However much these matters may exceed human comprehension, standing firm, on the other hand, is the Islamic principle advising against abandoning a part of something which can not be completely obtained. We therefore insist our readers to give us the benefit of the doubt by regarding us as having adhered to that principle and forgive our deficiencies of understanding and expression.

Another thing we must remember in relation is that human understanding conducts itself through impressions received from the world of sense. The impossibility of avoiding mistakes in cognizing and perfectly articulating the abstract truths that absolutely transcend experience therefore equally applies to understanding and adequately expressing the truth of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, a wonder of creation, and the gem that is the Holy Quran, the perfect manifestation of the names of Allah, glory unto Him. Paradise, Hell and other like images are simply expressions according to our understanding, the essence of which remains in the knowledge of Allah, glory unto Him, alone. All assessments conducted by the intellect and the purified heart about the metaphysical realities of Islam are true, albeit inadequate in their expression. They are true; only to the degree of their understanding and the extent of their explanation, which is bound to the impressions received from the world of sense. But they are inadequate. The difference between these metaphysical realities and the analogies experienced in the world of sense on which our supposed grasp is based, is infinity multiplied by infinity. To grasp these realities, there is needed another kind of understanding, a distinct possibility and

adequate channels. *Ruyatullah*, that is seeing the Almighty in the Hereafter, for instance. One cannot help but wonder whether 'seeing' is adequate to describe an event set to be experienced by Believers in the Hereafter. Indeed, it is inadequate, yet necessary in order to convey what is to come.

Therefore, it remains impossible for human beings to collect more than what their cups can hold from the vast ocean of truth, just as it is utterly impossible to fit the entire ocean into a cup. The cup here is language; it is reason. The eye is a cup in relation to vision. Just sheer helplessness!

The Almighty indeed depicts His Majesty, which exceeds the grasp of human understanding, in the following:

قُل لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّى لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ
قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّى وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا

"Say: "If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid." (al-Kahf, 109)

What is the capacity of the human cup, one must ponder, in contrast to the infinitely vast splendor and majesty of the Almighty?

It is not like the Truth is going to restrain itself for the sake of the lameness of understanding and explanation!

The meaning each word takes upon itself can only impart a content that is compatible with the understanding of the person expressing it. Yet, some concepts like Allah, the universe and spirit contain an infinite depth. Those who make use of such concepts in their speech and writing can only delve into them as much as the depth of their understandings allow. This applies just the same to what is understood by the listener or the reader.

Included among such concepts whose contents reach a depth beyond imagination are the sacred names of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. We hence expect the mercy of Allah, glory unto Him, and plead Him to overlook and forgive our lameness in conveying the content of those names and the inadequacies of our readers in comprehending them.

We now stand obliged, once again, to revert to silence, something that holds the greatest prospect of gathering the Truth, and bring our words to an end.

We have no other cure than to enshroud ourselves in the spirituality of Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ! Allah, glory unto Him, is the ultimate cure for the despondent…

Dahilak Ya Rasulallah…

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